

**Transferable Skills in Higher Education:  
The Contribution of Extracurricular Activity Participation**

By  
Emily Novakovic

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## Abstract

Extracurricular activities (EAs) often provide a high level of developmental experiences and positive academic outcomes. Various existing models illustrate the nature of EA outcomes, but fail to explain why these outcomes occur. Research is also limited to secondary education. This study uses qualitative methodology to explore student perceptions of EA outcomes applicable to academic work and future employment, and the factors that affect skill development and transfer. First year students from a Russell Group university (n=182) completed a video diary room, at one of two data collections. Inductive thematic analysis revealed four higher order themes discussing EA outcomes, including *positive mental qualities*, *intrapersonal skills*, *interpersonal skills* and *employment applications and awareness*. Three additional themes suggested EAs could have a *negative effect* or *no effect*, and that EA outcomes are dependent upon *EA type*. Factors that affect skill development and transfer were detailed by three higher order themes, including *EA characteristics*, *personal characteristics* and *university characteristics*. Students have some understanding of the benefits and potential disadvantages of EAs, and factors that affect skill development and transfer. Limited detail in student responses, particularly concerning skill development and transfer, may reflect limited self-reflection. Practical implications for higher education are discussed.

*Key words:* extracurricular activities, transferable skills, academic work, future employment, video diary room.

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## **Transferable Skills in Higher Education:**

### **The Contribution of Extracurricular Activity Participation**

Higher Education has become an increasingly popular post-secondary option for young adults (Stewart & Knowles, 2000), reflected by the steady rise in application numbers until 2011 (UCAS, 2013). Considering the significant investment of time and money that university requires, and the highly competitive graduate job market (Stewart & Knowles, 2000), students are under increasing pressure to be successful, both in terms of academic performance and broader personal development. UK universities on average had a 7.4 percent dropout rate in the 2011/12 academic year, whilst even at Russell Group universities where entry grades are more demanding, there is still significant dropout, averaging 3.6 percent (Russell Group, 2013). The majority of dropout occurs by the end of the first year of study (Van der Meer, Jansen, & Torenbeek, 2010).

Students have to adjust to university relatively quickly, as a positive first year experience provides a strong foundation for success in the following years (Hurtado et al., 2007; Jansen & Van der Meer, 2012). The most central academic adjustment is to the ‘student-centred’ teaching style favoured in higher education, which contrasts with the ‘teacher-centred’ approach prominent in secondary education (Torenbeek, Jansen, & Hofman, 2011). A ‘teacher-centred’ style has a focus on receiving and understanding information (Liu, Qiao, & Liu, 2006), whereas a ‘student-centred’ style encourages students to actively seek out associated information (Kember & Kwan, 2000). Higher education therefore emphasises independent learning, which requires a different skill set for success compared to secondary education.

Washer (2007) proposed a set of essential skills for university success based on a synthesis of several pre-existing key skills frameworks, including those produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (2000a, 2000b, 2001), National Committee of Enquiry into Higher Education



(1997), Joint Quality Initiative (2004), and the Commission of European Communities (2006).

Washer's framework conveys the importance of communication, working with others, problem solving, numeracy, the use of information technology, learning how to learn, and personal and professional development. An empirical investigation using an inventory measuring a similar skill set suggested that the development of these transferable skills facilitates a student's progression in independent learning (McLean, Shaban, & Murdoch-Eaton, 2011). In sum, this suggests that the development of a student's transferable skill set is essential within university success.

Transferable skills are also considered essential for entry into full time employment post graduation. Competition for graduate positions is high (Stewart & Knowles, 2000), and employers, as well as the government, stipulate that employable graduates should possess both generic and specific skills (Bennett, Dunne, & Carre, 2000). Therefore, it is important that graduates demonstrate and articulate the skills that employer's value most (Washer, 2007). The National Union of Students (2012) report that students are aware of this importance of transferable skills, but they lack the ability to explain how they have developed these skills or why they are useful. This may contribute to employers' perception that a lack of transferable skills exists in graduates (Bennett, 2002). Additionally, within employment, retraining and personal development is the norm (Blunkett, 1998), which requires the multiple applications of generic skills given this fast changing employment environment (Fallow & Stevens, 2000).

Despite this considerable interest in, and importance placed on, transferable skills for both academic and career success, there is a relative absence of explicit support for skill development within higher education teaching (Jones, 2009). An alternative approach to developing transferable skills is through participation in an extracurricular activity (EA), which occurs outside the academic curriculum and is both structured and voluntary (Larson, 2000; Watson, 1995). EAs are argued to be a good use of young peoples' time by developing skills (e.g., teamwork, taking initiative), social

networks, a sense of belonging and the opportunity to deal with challenges (Eccles, 2003; Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006), as well as providing the individual with higher motivation and concentration compared to other life domains (Larson, 2000). This research is limited to secondary education experience of EA, so there is less understanding of students' experiences of EAs within higher education.

Several theoretical models have been proposed to explain how EA participation impacts upon an individual (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). These include the "Developmental", "Zero-Sum" and "Threshold" models. The "Developmental" model views EAs as experiences that further the development of an individual, via building character and non-academic skills. This creates a well-rounded and socially adept individual. Students have reported a higher level of personal and interpersonal developmental experiences in EA than other environments, such as 'hanging out with friends' and 'academic classes' (Larson et al., 2006; Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003). This has been attributed to EAs providing a context particularly suited to fostering initiative, requisite skill, emotional competence, social skill development and identity (Dworkin, Larson, & Hansen, 2003). More specifically, EA participation (EAP) has been linked to such benefits as higher school grade point average, school engagement, more positive academic attitudes, educational aspirations (Cooper, Valentine, Nye, & Lindsay, 1999; Darling, Caldwell, & Smith, 2005; Eccles, 2003; Fletcher, Nickerson, & Wright, 2003; Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002) and a decreased dropout (Gillman, Meyer, & Perez, 2004; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; McNeal, 1995; Darling et al., 2005) in secondary school age children. In addition, longitudinal studies show that developmental gains are sustained beyond the period of participation, with benefits observed up to eight years post secondary education (Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001; Gardner, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Eccles & Barber, 1999).

The “Zero-Sum” model provides a contrasting view by proposing that the amount of time and commitment devoted to an EA is in direct competition to academic endeavours. It suggests, therefore, that participation will have a negative impact on academic efforts. The supporting research for this model is limited, with Marsh and Kleitman (2002) only illustrating a small negative association with standard test scores and staying out of trouble and an increase in activity participation. Further, in 2003, Marsh and Kleitman produced results that actively opposed this model, showing that athletics participation enhances academic and non-academic outcomes, including school grades and self-esteem, and supplements rather than contests curricular goals. The limited research examining this model, combined with the convincing evidence for the developmental model, limits the credibility of a simple zero-sum model.

However, a hybrid of the aforementioned models called the “Threshold” model has also been proposed. This posits that moderate amounts of EA elicit benefits, but beyond this optimal point there is a negative relationship between EAP and its associated outcomes that follows the law of diminishing returns. This “overscheduling effect” has been consistently demonstrated with a variety of outcomes, including but not limited to academic achievement, developmental success and depression (Busseri, Rose-Krasnor, Willoughby, & Chalmers, 2006; Fredrick & Eccles, 2006; Mahoney, Harris, & Eccles, 2006; Marsh, 1992; Marsh & Kleitman, 2002; Randall & Bohnert, 2009; Randall & Bohnert, 2012). Randall and Bohnert (2012) showed that five to seven hours of weekly EA participation led to a plateau in the psychological and social development of students. At ten hours or more per week negative outcomes occurred, including a decrease in social acceptance and an increase in loneliness. Knifsend and Graham (2012) also illustrated this model in the number of activity domains participated in, showing a curvilinear relationship between the total number and grade point average.

The above-mentioned models are limited in scope, focusing only on the skills developed during EA, and fail to explore the utilisation of these skills in other contexts. To exploit any broader

beneficial outcomes of EA participation, the skill must be deployed successfully in other domains, such as academia and employment. This has been termed “transfer”, which is generally defined as carrying the outcomes of learning between environments (Beach, 1999). Eraut (2010) defines transfer as a five stage learning process. Firstly, an individual must extract the skill from the acquisition environment. Secondly, an understanding of the potential future application of this skill must be developed. Thirdly, associated skills and knowledge should be identified. Fourthly, these skills and knowledge need to be transformed to suit the application environment. Finally, the given skill and associated skills must be integrated to successfully engage in the new environment. It follows that this multidimensional process also must require a number of different skills. Therefore it is likely that there is a complex set of factors that affect an individual’s ability to undergo this process, rather than it being innate.

Baldwin and Ford (1988) created a model that communicated these contributory factors to skill development and transfer. They suggest that there are three determinants, including characteristics of the trainees, the training, and the context of the future application (see Figure 1). This model was developed within an employment setting, but appears applicable to a variety of contexts. For example, within the current academic setting, “Trainee Characteristics” would apply to the student, whereas “Training Design” would describe the learning environment i.e. the EA, and the “Work Environment” would represent the transfer environment i.e. the degree programme and has the potential to represent employment in the future. The model emphasises the potential importance of understanding these different factors and how they could influence skill development and transfer.

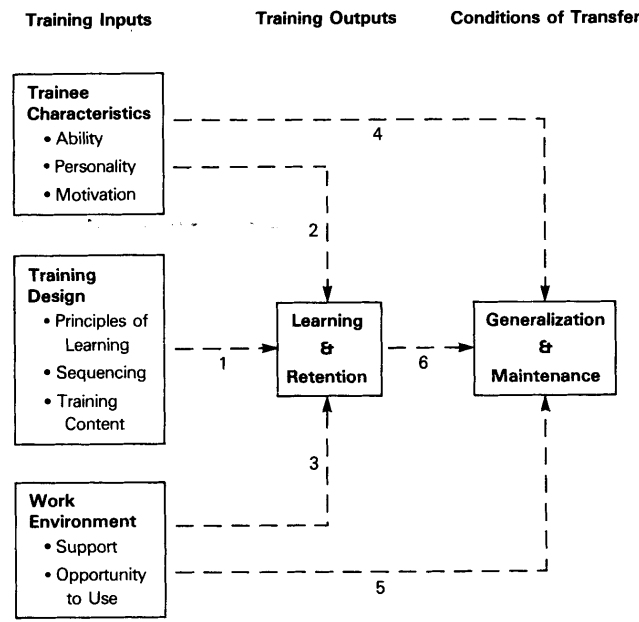


Figure 1. Baldwin and Ford's (1988) Model of the Transfer Process

The multiple contributory factors to transfer highlight its complexity. Equally, the relationship between EA and their outcomes is complex. Similar to the ideas of “Trainee Characteristics” and “Work Environment”, variation in EA outcomes occurs at both an individual and environmental level, with self-selection into EA suggesting that EA participants may be innately different to those who do not participate and the different developmental opportunities for different activity types (Larson et al., 2006). There are also suggested complex interactions between the individual and the environment, illustrated through a synergistic relationship between the activity characteristics, the participant’s identity and their social networks (Eccles & Barber, 1999). As a result, quantitative researchers typically treat both transfer and EA as a black box; that is, little attempt has been made to articulate the mechanism by which EA leads to positive outcomes (Brown, 1998; Eccles & Templeton, 2002; Holland & Andre, 1987). Instead, the focus has been on investigating the academic outcomes, rather than the reason why these outcomes occur. This perpetuates a product-orientated viewpoint, meaning that we know little of how to maximise the use and benefits of EA within academia. Finally, research

has fairly exclusively been conducted in a secondary education setting, giving uncertainty as to whether EA outcomes previously discussed are similar in higher education.

Therefore, the next step is to use a higher education setting and identify EA outcomes as well as the most salient contributory factors to which affect the use of these outcomes in other settings. When participating in EAs, individuals are “the agents of their own development and change” (Dworkin, et al., 2003, p.24); this emphasises the importance of understanding an individual’s own perception on their developmental process to inform this research area (Larson et al., 2006). Therefore qualitatively investigating this phenomenon would be effective, which is absent in current research despite calls for such an approach (Gilman, Meyers, & Perez, 2004). Selecting an appropriate qualitative technique, that is novel enough to attract participation whilst allowing all type of individuals to take part, is paramount, given the diversity within the student population. A video diary room has been previously used to good effect within the student population and attracts non-typical participants (Cooley, Holland, Cumming, Novakovic, & Burns, 2013; Poole, 2007).

Therefore, the aim of this research was to use a novel qualitative method to explore students’ perceptions on EAs and transferable skills. Specifically, we investigated student perceptions of academic and employment outcomes of EA, and the factors that affect skill development and transfer, including existing factors and potential future university initiatives. These findings have practical implications for higher education in how to maximise the benefit of EAP within academia.

## **Method**

### **Philosophical Assumptions**

Postpositivist philosophical assumptions guide this research. Postpositivism has an explanatory aim of inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), and has criteria for trustworthiness that recognises the researchers’ knowledge and background influences findings (Curtin & Fossey, 2007). Trustworthiness

is rigorously sought after in qualitative research due to its relatively new appearance in literature and non-standardised protocol (Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis, & Sparkes, 2001).

Trustworthiness, within postpositivism, is achieved when findings reflect participant descriptions accurately (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and can be judged using “parallel criteria” to validity and reliability (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba 2011). These criteria include credibility (i.e., the extent to which findings are congruent with reality), transferability (i.e., the extent to which findings can be generalised), dependability (i.e., the extent to which findings can be repeated), and confirmability (i.e., the extent to which findings are aligned with the situation and free of researcher bias) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In the present research, trustworthiness is ensured through researcher reflexivity, triangulation, peer debriefers, negative case analysis and thick description. We provide extensive detail of the researcher, research context, procedures and participants in the form of an audit trail (see Appendix A), to allow readers to make their own judgements regarding the generalisation of findings. This is important as trustworthiness is subject to the insight of the reader (Rolfe, 2006).

### **Researcher as instrument**

Researcher reflexivity was used to identify where and how potential researcher bias could be in operation, to further fulfil confirmability. As the main researcher, I have been active in transferable skills research within the student population for approximately two years, accumulating experience with the population and methodology. I take part in extracurricular activities and was, until recently, part of the undergraduate population at the university. My personal ontological beliefs lie towards constructivism, where reality is individually constructed as incoming information is shaped by existing knowledge and experience (Weed, 2009). My epistemological beliefs are in correspondence with interpretivism, where knowledge and understanding is influenced by subjective interpretations (Weed,

2009). These beliefs will permit the data analysis to reflect participants' subjective perceptions and interpretations, without assuming that there is a right or wrong response applicable to every student.

The broader research group involved in this investigation examines the transfer of skills. Therefore we have interest in the topic and a belief that EAs have the potential to be positive in some manner. The group consists of myself and six additional researchers, each of whom have distinct roles within this research. Two third year undergraduate students and one relatively experienced qualitative researcher contributed to second coding the data. The two project leads, also experienced researchers, and a postgraduate student contributed at the peer review stage. Additionally, a university department funded this project. Although there are certain external pressures to obtain results with useful implications for university policy, the involvement of the funders was limited to identifying the broad topic for exploration, and didn't impact data collection, analysis, or interpretation.

## **Research Environment**

The study took place at a large research-led institution that forms part of the Russell Group of Universities. The student population is approximately 27,600, with 17.6 percent being international students. Entry grades vary between courses, but are typically high A-level grades, although some students are able to enter with non-traditional qualifications and/or after completion of a foundation year.

## **Participants**

A total of 182 first year undergraduate students were recruited over two data collection time points: week seven of semester one (5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> November 2012) and week five of semester two (4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2013). These yielded a diverse set of participants in terms of ethnicity and course subject area (as represented by the five Colleges at the University; see Table 1). Within qualitative research there are no strict boundaries as to what constitutes a sufficient sample size (Biddle et al., 2001; Patton, 2002), and is ultimately a matter of judgement (Sandelowski, 1995). It is however important to



consider saturation within adequacy of a sample size, with the nature of the method and topic being important influential factors (Morse, 2000). Given that our method utilizes a small number of questions in order to target a high number of people with the inability to ask follow-up questions, we needed a large sample size to reach saturation. In addition, we were investigating a broadly defined phenomenon, which requires a larger sample size to reach saturation (Morse, 2000). To note, once approximately 70 percent of transcripts were analyzed no new themes were created, with all the codes created fitting into existing themes.

This study received ethical approval from the appropriate Ethics Committee and all participants gave informed consent.

Table 1.

#### Participant Demographics.

Demographic	Diary Room 1 (N=93)	Diary Room 2 (N=89)
Sex (% male)	53.8%	38.2%
Age (SD)	18.7 (1.3)	18.8 (0.7)
Status (% Home)	81.7%	84.9%
Ethnicity		
White	68.8%	77.5%
Asian or Asian British	23.6%	12.4%
Black or Black British	5.4%	1.1%
Mixed	1.1%	9.0%
Other	1.1%	0.0%
College		
Arts and Law	21.5%	29.2%
Engineering and Physical Science	28.0%	20.2%
Life and Environmental Sciences	34.4%	27.0%
Medical and Dental Sciences	3.2%	6.7%
Social Sciences	12.9%	16.9%

#### The “Diary Room” technique

The type of qualitative data collection employed was the “Diary Room” technique (Cooley et al., 2013). This is a modification on a semi-structured interview, whereby the participant is given a written set of questions and asked to read out and respond appropriately, whilst being filmed alone in the diary room. No interviewer is needed, which creates a sense of privacy and therefore elicits honest and rich data.

Similar methodology has been employed more commonly in ethnography and anthropology, but is underrepresented in traditional scientific research (Pirie, 1996). The technique originates from, and extends, the written diary (e.g., Sa, 2002; Tang, 2002). In written diaries, participation fatigue often allows motivation to wane (Maikler, Broom, Bailey, & Lea, 2001). In contrast, the diary room permits short, spontaneous entries and so is less affected by fatigue. Additionally, writing is more consciously moderated, creating the potential for a less honest and representative response. Furthermore, at UK universities, there is a relatively high representation of international students who do not speak English as a first language and may find it easier to express themselves verbally (Buchwald, Schantz-Larsen, & Delmar, 2009; Maikler et al., 2001; Punch, 2002).

A video diary room removes the reliance on good researcher-participant rapport (Noyes, 2004). However, the lack of researcher control to direct entries creates the potential for irrelevant data particularly when only a core theme is provided for the interviewee to discuss, and if participants are given the opportunity to pre-plan their entry, social desirability may become an issue (Buchwald et al., 2009). A logical improvement of this previous approach was to employ semi-structured questioning to direct the participants' monologue (Cooley et al., 2013). In their study, Cooley et al. ensured that the questions were designed to allow for a core theme in participant responses to emerge, but to be open-ended enough to provide flexibility in how these were answered. Responses could therefore be given in a unique and individual way, incorporating personal views (Smith, 2009), whilst still providing a focused and more in-depth response than without this semi-structured guidance.

Finally, a video diary has the additional benefit of encouraging individuals to participate that would not typically respond to traditional methods, such as questionnaires (Poole, 2007). It is also a unique technique in that it can capture in the moment experiences, a diverse range of views through allowing large participation rates and collect high quality data using relatively inexperienced researchers.

## Question Development

For both data collections, the main researcher and two others experienced in the diary room methodology from the research group developed potential questions. These centred around the agreed conceptual theme of transferable skills developed in EA that may be applicable to academic and employment settings. The number of questions were reduced and/or modified following discussions considering their quality and clarity. The revised questions were then given to a steering committee, consisting of key university staff involved in student skill development, for further review. This consultation was used to confirm that the questions were applicable to this student population, relevant to the university, made sense to non-specialists and reduced researcher bias.

### Data Collection One

The finalised question set for the first diary room consisted of five questions to be answered by all participants, which did not enquire specifically into theory-based ideas. Only two of these questions were used in the current analysis. These included an introductory question, implemented as an adjustment period for the participants to relax and therefore create more detailed and honest responses in later questions (Cooley et al., 2013), and a question exploring how EAP impacts academic work.<sup>1</sup> See Table 2 for the questions.

Table 2.

Diary Room Data Collection One Questions.

Question Number	Question
1	Tell us a bit about yourself – what you’re studying, where you’re from etc.
2	What extracurricular activities do you take part in? How does this participation affect your academic work?

<sup>1</sup> Additionally, students were also asked three, two-part questions which included ‘How well are you adjusting to independent study at university? How are your previous experiences affecting this on-going process?’, ‘How, if at all, have the increased tuition fees changed your approach to studying and your expectations of the university?’, and ‘Apart from subject specific knowledge, what general transferable skills do you expect to develop whilst at university? How do you think these will help you be a successful student?’. These questions acted to inform stakeholders more generally of the first year university experience and therefore were not included in the current analysis.

## **Data Collection Two**

The second data collection question set was administered to an independent cohort of students from data collection one, but the questions were informed by the qualitative analysis of the first data collection in two ways. Firstly, as the questioning in the first data collection did not consider whether students participated in EA and did not explore basic views on whether skills learnt in EA can be used elsewhere, it was postulated that interesting detail was lost. Therefore, in the second diary room, questions were tailored to the EA status of the participant. In other words, there were three sets of questions: one for those who don't participate in EA; one for those that do and believed they have developed transferable skills for the use in academia; and one for those that do but do not believe they have developed transferable skills for the use in academia. Secondly, the first diary room analysis illustrated that students' views mainly fell into either a sum-zero or a developmental perspective. This provided the rationale for question one, which investigated the degree of agreement with the sum-zero and developmental theoretical perspectives in all participants. In question two we were interested in why participants do not participate, what factors affect skill transfer and development in those who believe they have developed transferable skills, and a reflection on the skills developed in EA identified in data collection one analysis in those who do not believe they have developed transferable skills. The two final questions investigated what the university could do to support skill development and transfer given their current participation and beliefs on transferable skills, and what links EA has to future employment in all participants. See Table 3 for the questions.

Table 3.

## Diary Room Data Collection Two Questions.

Question Number	EA status of the participant		
	Doesn't participate in EA	Participates in EA and believes they have developed transferable skills	Participates in EA and does not believe they have developed transferable skills
1	<p>Some researchers believe that time spent in extracurricular activities is in direct competition with the amount of time available for academic commitments. They believe, therefore, that extracurricular activities will have either no effect or negative effects on your academic work. On the other hand, other researchers view extracurricular activities as opportunities for individuals to develop transferable skills. This could be via intentional efforts (e.g. if you do an activity specifically to develop skills) or simply the by-products of participation. To what extent do you agree with each of these viewpoints and why?</p>		
2	Why have you chosen not to participate in any extracurricular activities?	Please describe any qualities about you or your environment that have made it easier or harder for you to develop transferable skills and use them in your academic work?	In our previous research, students reported developing the following skills in extracurricular activities and using them in academic work <sup>2</sup> . Upon reflection, do you think that you have developed these, or any other, skills during your extracurricular activity participation? If not, why do you think this is?
3	Is there anything that the university could do to support you, if you wanted to start participating in extracurricular activities? If so, please give examples.	Is there anything that the university could do, or stop doing, to support you with this further? If so, please give examples.	Is there anything that the University could do, or stop doing, to help you to develop these skills and/or apply them in your academic work? If so, please give examples.
4	To what extent do you think extracurricular activity participation prepares you for future employment? Please give examples.		

**Procedure**

Data was collected in a variety of locations on campus, including outside the Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences building, student accommodation, the library and the sports centre. A

<sup>2</sup> The skills presented included: Verbal and Written communication, Organisation, Team work, Motivation, Focus, Peer Support, Confidence, Hard Work, Time Management.

branded promotional tent was used for the diary room to create the required privacy (See Appendix B for images). A video camera was set up on a tripod inside the tent and directed towards the participants' chair to capture the entry.

Given the opportunistic nature of our method, we predominantly employed random sampling by recruiting passing students from locations rich in first year students and EA participants. We also employed an element of purposive sampling in an attempt to achieve diversity within our sample (Hastie & Hay, 2012), through selecting students on visible demographics, such as ethnicity. Twenty participants initially refused to participate due to a dislike of being filmed. However, they all agreed to be involved with the study when offered to be audio recorded only.

Appropriately trained research assistants presented the information sheet to participants, and took informed consent and basic demographic information. They were also given a written definition of transferable skills and EAP to avoid question misinterpretation. EA participation was defined using a scale created for the purpose of this study, with EA types defined by the goals of participation. Participants were required to indicate how frequently they undertake a range of EA types, from 'Never' (1) to 'Regularly' (5), including voluntary prosocial, performance, organised recreational, employment, caring, organisational and leadership, and academic (See Appendices C, D, E and F for resources). Participants were fully briefed by the main researcher and then left alone in the diary room for the duration of the entry. They were instructed to read each question aloud, answer each in full detail and then find the researcher when finished. The main researcher debriefed to confirm successful entries, thanked the participant and was responsible for the video recording.

### **Data preparation and analysis**

Diary room entries were professionally transcribed verbatim, producing 34,842 words of text. On average, participants from data collection one discussed the question using 61 words, whilst participants from data collection two discussed the four questions using 328 words. The data was

processed using Nvivo 10, which allows the systematic organisation and analysis of a high volume of qualitative data. This helps to examine patterns, and minimise the risk of analysis error associated with large sample sizes as highlighted by Biddle et al. (2001). Transcripts were subject to inductive thematic analysis, which was chosen to reflect the exploratory nature of the study. This analysis aims to create an accurate reflection of the entire data set and provide a descriptive account of the emergent themes without fitting them into, or generating, theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Howitt, 2010). It also ensures that themes are derived only, and directly, from the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), which is critical given the limited previous research dealing with this phenomenon. In addition, there was no attempt to quantify the data (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). It is important to note that, whilst the second data collection was informed by the first and was more theory-based, analysis remained inductive. The data was not forced into a pre-existing theme structure, rather the data itself guided the generation of the theme structure. A semantic approach was undertaken, which took the data at explicit meaning and was careful not to interpret beyond what was transcribed (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **Data Collection One**

Analysis followed the five-step process described by Howitt (2010); all stages were independently carried out by three researchers for 100 percent of the data, allowing for investigator triangulation. Employing this method acted to increase the trustworthiness of analysis (Patton, 2002). In addition, to further minimise analysis error, analysis occurred over several months. See Table 4 for details.

Table 4.

Five Stage of Inductive Thematic Analysis (Howitt, 2010).

Step	Task	Process
1	Data familiarisation	To familiarise oneself with the data, strategies such as watching, transcribing and rereading entries were extensively employed.
2	Initial coding	Each distinct unit of text, known as a raw data unit, was allocated a descriptive code one level of abstraction away from the data. Care was taken to not de-contextualise the data to become personally and contextually neutral, a common criticism of the coding process (Biddle et al., 2001). This was done by ensuring codes created were large enough to include the main point and associated explanation, allowing it to be understood in isolation.
3	Search for themes base on initial coding	These codes were then grouped into themes, and further organised into levels of themes. They were created whilst ensuring internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity (Patton, 2002). Theme prevalence was not explicitly discussed because theme creation was informed by its contribution to the overall research question, rather than quantifiable measures such as frequency of occurrence (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes from the final transcripts did not warrant new themes, suggesting that saturation was approached. Theoretical saturation is an ideal in qualitative data as it marks data integrity and refers to adequate depth within themes (Williams & Morrow, 2009).
4	Review of themes	Each theme was then reviewed in light of the raw data and the research questions.
5	Theme definition and labelling	Finally, appropriate theme names and definitions were devised. Terms used to create these originated from the data itself, further reinforcing a data-led approach (Hastie & Glotova, 2012).

Once the three researchers had undertaken these steps, discussion occurred between them until consensual validation was reached. Here, the codes and themes were scrutinised until agreement occurred, referring back to the original data when appropriate. Discussion also critically analysed theme names and definitions, and ensured that the analysis accurately reflected the raw data. Reaching an overall consensus between all three researchers allowed assured validity of terms and reduction of researcher bias (Côté, Salmela, & Baria, 1993). Throughout, not only conforming, but also disconfirming evidence was identified, in accordance with negative case analysis (Creswell & Miller, 2000).



Final validation took place via peer review, which reinforces the trustworthiness of the data (Patton, 2002). The data analysis was presented to the two project leads and postgraduate student, who were uninvolved in the data collection and analysis to date. A ‘devil’s advocate’ approach was employed to encourage conflict and critique of the analysis, which helps to reduce the effect of theoretical alignment within research groups (Krane, Andersen, & Streat, 1997).

### **Data Collection Two**

The analysis for the second data collection deviated from the first in three ways. Firstly, the main researcher conducted analysis for 100 percent of the data, whilst another researcher coded 20 percent separately, for verification. Secondly, theme definition and labelling was carried out by the main researcher and discussed to confirm with the second researcher. Thirdly, progressive focusing was employed to create theoretical parsimony. This recognises that qualitative research does not necessarily progress in a linear manner and findings develop throughout the process (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012). A full audit trail can be found in Appendix A. In short, analysis was initially structured using the etic questions asked to participants. Etic questions, or outsider questions, are often imposed on data when there is limited previous research knowledge (Buckley & Chapman, 1997). Upon peer review, it was clear that similar themes were developed across the different questions and the three groups. Therefore to ensure external heterogeneity, it was important that these similar ideas were together. This permitted the integration of the first data collection themes into the second to present collectively, as well as collapsing the data across questions and groups from the second data collection. In addition, research appropriate emic questions were developed including ‘What are the outcomes of EAP?’ and ‘What factors affect the development and transference of skill?’<sup>3</sup>. Emic questions, or insider questions, emerge from the data and hence create a more data led enquiry (Buckley & Chapman, 1997). This allows the refinement of broad initial research questions (Sinkovics & Alfoldi,

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<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the data yielded another section, ‘What factors affect EA participation?’. This was, however, beyond the scope of this thesis, and so a summary table can be found in Appendix I.

2012). These emic questions shaped the subsequent data exploration as the data set was viewed as a whole and original questions were used only to give context to the themes. This created a fitting line of research enquiry as the focus emphasises the content of the transcripts, something highlighted by many other researchers (Buckley & Chapman, 1997; Davidson, Jaecard, Triandis, Morales & Diaz- Guerrero, 1976; Mott-Stenerson, 2008).

## **Results**

The results are organised into two distinct sections: *Outcomes of Participation in EA* and *Factors affecting the Development and Transfer of Skills*. These are discussed through their higher order themes (bold, indented), along with the lower order themes (italicised). Although all quotations are anonymised, the more extensive extracts have been annotated with the academic college in which the participant studies, and the type of EA in which they engage (see Table 5 for definitions), to contextualise the comments.

Table 5.

## Definitions of EA Types.

Activity type	Definition	Examples
Voluntary prosocial	An unpaid activity that is undertaken primarily for the benefit of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteering</li> <li>• Community activities</li> </ul>
Performance	An activity with the main outcome focused on achieving a certain standard.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive sports/dance</li> <li>• Participation in theatre productions</li> </ul>
Organised recreational	An activity whereby the main outcome is focused enjoyment rather than achieving a certain standard of performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non- competitive organised sports/arts</li> <li>• Music practice</li> </ul>
Employment	A paid or unpaid activity that is representative of the working environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paid work</li> <li>• Internships</li> <li>• Work experience</li> </ul>
Caring responsibilities	When an individual is accountable for the wellbeing and safety of another individual and must therefore devote time and effort to the associated activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking after children/ dependent parents</li> </ul>
Organisational and leadership	An activity whereby the participant takes responsibility for the organisation of an event and/or group of other individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee participation</li> <li>• Event organisation</li> </ul>
Extracurricular academic	An activity that is closely associated with the individual's area of study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutoring</li> <li>• Student representation</li> <li>• Ambassador roles</li> <li>• Study groups</li> </ul>

**Outcomes of Participation in EA**

Most students gave at least one example of how EAP can help develop non-academic skills that may be useful for academic work and/or employment. In some cases, this was a relatively broad conception that EAP “makes you a more dynamic and rounded person which employers look for” (Arts and Law, caring EA), and that EAP participation indicates that “you’re not just intent on just academic stuff or there’s only one thing you can focus on, but actually you have a range of interests and you’re more developed than just being able to do your chosen subject” (Medical and Dental Sciences,

Performance EA). Within the highly competitive current graduate job market, students are recognising the need to stand out from their peers as “almost everyone who comes out of university has a good degree to their name so extracurricular activities do set you apart from other people” (Arts and Law, organised recreational EA). Students also understand that beyond this superficial level separation, in EA you “develop other skills that employers and people in your future you look for, so its not just you know you’ve got full marks in everything you possibly did academically” (Engineering and Physical Sciences, organised recreational EA). In addition, more specific examples were given of individual skills developed by EAP. It should be noted, however, that few gave more than one or two examples, and it remains unclear whether this is because the students did not believe they developed other skills or because they felt that one or two examples were sufficient to answer the question. The identified skills were categorised into four higher order themes of *positive mental qualities*, *interpersonal skills*, *intrapersonal skills*, and *employment applications and awareness*. In addition, three further themes were identified, in which participants suggested that EA could have a *negative effect* or *no effect*, or that the effects depended on the *EA type*. Within these seven higher order themes, 15 lower order themes were identified (Figure 2; See Appendix G for a more detailed summary).

**Positive Mental Qualities.** Positive mental qualities were broadly conceptualised as characteristics that promoted an active and appropriate engagement with challenging situations, and could be further categorised into the *drive to succeed*, *independence*, and *relaxation*. These qualities are likely to be particularly pertinent in a first year undergraduate population, who are currently managing a transition to a more independent, less monitored lifestyle. The *drive to succeed* was described using a variety of terms, including ambition, dedication, determination and enthusiasm, but was generally characterised as EAP helping develop persistence and focus. For example, it was noted that it “could also help you with your academic activities like you need to continue with something, if there’s some work or something you don’t want to do”. Students also identified that EAP “improve[s]

my concentration”, and “[EAP] gives you the incentive to not want to fail and to do your best”. One student explained:

I’ve always found that swimming and doing sport has made me more motivated in school and academic work because you’ve got the desire to sort of do well and win all the time and that sort of carries through into school (Life and Environmental Sciences, performance EA).

The notion, raised by this student, of enhanced competitiveness as a benefit, was also discussed in relation to employment. For example, one Engineering and Physical Sciences student explained, “you develop skills with extracurricular activities such as ... competitiveness, which in future employment is very helpful because obviously it’s competitive” (performance EA).

A related concept identified by some students was the development of *independence*. This could be described as the ability to carry out tasks without external assistance and taking personal responsibility for behaviour. For example, a student involved with organised recreational activities, reported that EAP could illustrate “that I can go off and work on my own and get stuff done” (Engineering and Physical Sciences). This also encompassed notions of professional behaviour and trust, in which EAP helped you to be “responsible with your time and in the way you behave” (Social Sciences, voluntary prosocial EA). This theme was discussed in relation to future employment only; however, given the difficulty first year students experience adjusting to the ‘student-centered’ teaching style at university (Torenbeek, Jansen, & Hofman, 2011), the need for independence is also great within this setting. Independence is often underpinned by confidence, particularly in relation to interacting with new people, taking risks and trying new things. For example, “extracurricular activities are really important for future employment because it gives you more confidence for talking to lots of different people” (Life and Environmental Sciences, voluntary prosocial, organisational and leadership EA). *Independence* and *drive to succeed* are likely to be interrelated, and relate specifically to being able to identify and complete tasks within less regulated, challenging environments.

A more distinct mental quality was also identified as *relaxation*, in which EAP provided catharsis from academic pressures. For example, one student noted, “extracurricular activities will have a positive effect on your academic work because they can relieve things like stress which can have a negative effect on your academic work” (Engineering and Physical Sciences, performance EA). The focus here is on the short term benefits from this form of stress relief; however, a broader skill not articulated by our participants could be recognising that emotional responses to difficult situations can be regulated in a positive way (i.e. through EAP).

**Intrapersonal Transferable Skills.** EAP was perceived to develop particular personal skills, where skill execution was independent of interaction with other individuals. This included *literacy*, *generic study skills* and *creativity*. *Literacy* and *generic study skills* provided the most explicit link to academic work. *Literacy* discussed the ability to use language proficiently, through reading, writing and speaking. Both home and international students deemed this important for the use in academic work. The development of reading and written communication was discussed, with an Arts and Law student mentioning that they are “a member of the Book Society and I think that’s a good transferable skill because I’m reading lots of books, so developing my literacy skills and my use of words in essays” (performance and organised recreational EA). With regards to speaking, this was discussed with reference to students who do not speak English as a first language. It was suggested that for these students the social interactions provided by EA enabled them to develop their English language for academia. An international student explained that “I’m going to church every weekend and I meet some people who speak in English so I think I’ve improved my English” (Social Sciences, voluntary prosocial EA). At many UK universities, there are a high percentage of international students who often have learnt English as a second language and hence may struggle with basic communication. Therefore these improved language skills may assist with integration into the university population as well as maximise potential academic success.

*Generic study skills* extend and supplement literacy skills, and included other skills that maximise academic success. The defining idea here was that EAs “make you more smart” (Social Sciences, voluntary prosocial EA) and “kind of expand on the knowledge that you’ve learnt in academia” (Art and Law, performance EA). In conjunction with this, EAs increase certain skills to assist in an academic pursuit. Upon EAP, the participant must manage their daily schedule in a way that prevents adverse effects on other commitments, such as those to their academic work and social life. In doing so, an individual often develops organisation and the ability to structure one’s lifestyle efficiently, highlighted in “from rowing I have developed a training routine, which means that I can incorporate exercise as well as keeping up with my academic work and my social life” (Arts and Law, performance EA). Participation itself can also equip an individual with the skills to strategically tackle a degree-associated problem. One Life and Environmental Sciences student identified that “from rugby for example, strategies helps towards working out problems, for example in my studies with sport and exercise sciences it helps with, especially biomechanics, so working out problems, finding solutions, just like in a game of rugby when you have to come up with strategies to get past and score tries against the opposition” (performance and organised recreational EA). It also appears that within specific EAs, participation has the capacity to develop memory. For example, a participant who was involved with drama productions commented “Line learning, I guess that has helped because I’ve got to memorise and learn opinions of historians” (Arts and Law, performance EA).

In addition, certain EAs also develop *creativity*, where the ability to create new and original ideas was deemed important for future employment. In response to asking how EAP impacts future employment, one individual responded, “I do art soc and that’s something that encourages you to think creatively” (Engineering and Physical Sciences, organised recreational EA). The absence of academic work within this discussion could suggest that students rigidly follow their degree’s key learning

outcomes without thinking much beyond presented material. Alternatively, students may not recognise creativity beyond domains typically associated with the construct, such as music or art productions.

**Interpersonal Transferable Skills.** This personal skills set was defined by the central tenet of interaction with other individuals. Extensively discussed was *group work*, which was deemed useful for both academic problem solving and boosting the productivity of future employment. It was characterised by cooperation and the leadership of others, whilst putting aside personal differences and ensuring effective communication. Group work skills were perceived to carry well from EA into employment, as “if you can get on well with them in a sports team or something like that then it’s more than possible that you can work well in a team in the workplace and you can probably boost productivity” (Social Sciences, employment). In a similar vein, group work within EA is also applicable to academia, discussed well in that “basketball is a group... it’s a team sport, which means again it will improve my teamwork and as an engineering student we have to work together to solve problems so this will help me improve my teamwork and my communication with other people” (Engineering and Physical Sciences).

For group work to be effective, individuals must also “understand that not everyone’s the same, that you can’t interact with everyone in the same way, some people will not respond in such a positive manner as other people” (Engineering and Physical Sciences, organised recreational, organisational and leadership EA). Further, appropriate communication is therefore essential within group work. In relation to academic work, one individual identified that through their volunteering with primary school children they had “learnt a lot of communication skills because talking to those, the sort of children, I mean the children they’re completely different to talking to someone sort of my age or older” (Engineering and Physical Sciences, employment). Similarly, within a challenging situation, for example, it is important to remain patient with others. This was evident for one individual whilst volunteering with a youth group, as they “learnt a lot of patience from it which can help me in my



degree quite a lot” (Social Sciences, voluntary prosocial EA). Hence, by verbally communicating with a variety of people, in a range of settings, an individual can gain the ability to recognize the differences between groups and respond appropriately. The appropriateness also extends beyond the audience, to what situation is being communicated in.

**Employment Applications and Awareness.** Within employment, EAP offers facilitation in applying for and subsequently getting a job. Initially, it promotes active engagement in other life domains and hence encourages an elevated effort to seek employment, allowing an individual to be *active in the job search*. This was communicated well in the following quote, “[EAP] encourages you to like go out and do stuff for yourself, and by doing that it will make you more active in looking for future employment” (Life and Environmental Sciences, performance EA).

Once an individual’s job search identifies a suitable position, EAP also assists with *CV development*, facilitating the application process. This was described in quite a shallow way with typical quotes indicating that EAs “look good on a CV, which actually helps you get jobs in the first place” (Social Sciences, performance EA), without elaborating on why this might be the case.

Assisting in securing a job, EAP also contributed towards an *awareness of working practice*, where there is an appreciation of change, an understanding of job roles and an overarching awareness of the employment sector. Through the Air cadets, for example, “you get to know like what can and can’t be changed and you get to know how things work more and like who you’re supposed to talk to and the process that things are going to go through” (Engineering and Physical Sciences). Organisational awareness is high on employers’ requirements, and so this relevant experience and awareness is highly advantageous to display within obtaining employment.

**Negative Outcomes.** There was, however, also a minority of students that thought EAP could be debilitating to academic work. The defining feature was the *time commitment* associated with participation. EAP limits time available for academic work, creating pressure and disturbing academic

focus. This is well illustrated by one individual, “[Participation] does put on a lot of pressure, having to fit in the academic work around you know the trainings and that” (Life and Environmental Sciences, performance and organised recreational EA). *Fatigue and injury* was mentioned by few individuals, typified by the following quote: “I get really tired on Wednesdays because we have to get up at 6 in the morning and train 7 till quarter to 9 then I have a lecture straight away so I get really tired...I’ve had quite a few injuries ... so that's kind of made me a bit “ugh” towards work” (Social Sciences, performance EA). Therefore physical activity can cause tiredness and injury, which have the potential to de-motivate and negatively impact work.

**No Effect.** Not all students felt that EA had an impact upon academic work or future employment, due to two distinct reasons. Firstly, some students thought that within EA *skill is developed but not transferred* into another setting. “For example my teamwork has got better in my extracurricular activity but not in my work and the same with my focus and motivation” (Social Sciences, performance EA). This may suggest that there is a low level of awareness regarding how these skills can be utilised in alternative settings to the learning environment. Secondly, students also discussed that there was no negative connotations with EAP simply because there is *no conflict between EAP and academic work*. EAs can require a relatively limited time commitment and occur at non-working times, and therefore may not conflict with other pursuits. For example, “training is sort of at times when you wouldn’t really be revising anyway” (Life and Environmental Sciences, performance EA). Alternatively, adequate management skills can manipulate an individual’s daily routine to create no conflict, through the utilisation of organisational skills and prioritising academic work over EA. This idea was articulated through “It doesn’t really affect my academic work too much in that I can still get it done because I’m organised and I’ve learnt how to organise it well” (Engineering and Physical Sciences, organised recreational EA) and “I don’t think they affect my

academic work that much, I think I always put work first before extracurricular” (Arts and Law, employment).

**EA Type.** One response detailed that the type of transferable skills developed “does also depend on what type of extra curricular activities you are doing” (Arts and Law, performance and organised recreational EA). This recognises that EAs are not identical, and have a variety of different activities, purposes, types of participants and leaders etc. so there must be a variety of different outcomes.

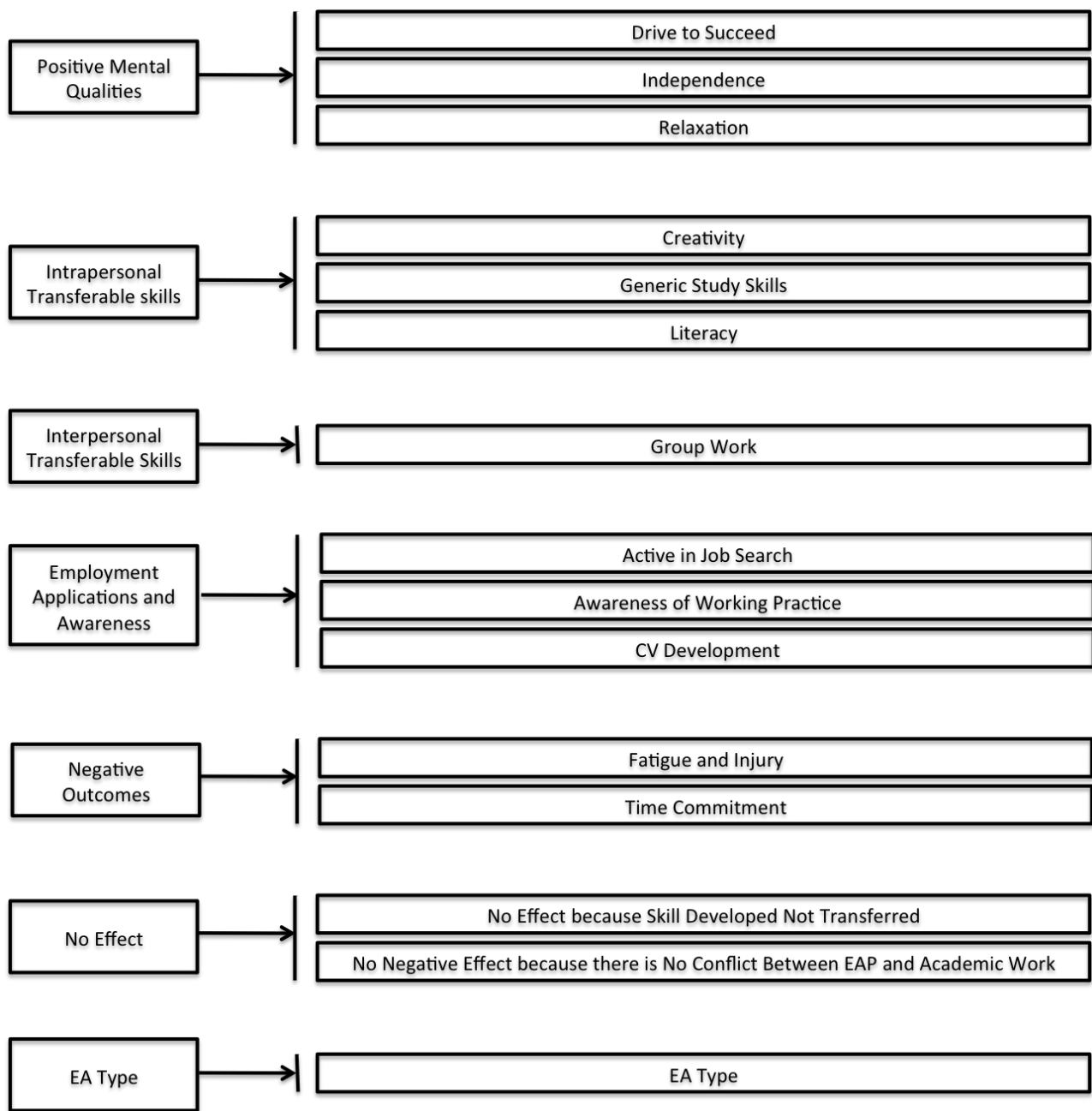


Figure 2. Outcomes of participation in EA.

### Factors affecting the development and transfer of skills

Students identified a broad range of factors that influenced skill development and transfer. However, the student responses that contributed to this higher order theme were generally less articulate than those describing the outcomes of EA and students appeared to find them more challenging to formulate. As such, it was difficult to identify whether individuals were referring to the

development or transfer of skill, although where possible this has been acknowledged. This also resulted in students discussing a small number of niche ideas rather than being able to articulate a broad overview, and dominating with the discussion of enablers, rather than barriers, to the process. Enablers include positive factors that are already in existence and student recommendations for future university implementations. Collectively, this resulted in three higher order themes including *EA characteristics*, *personal characteristics* and *university characteristics*, made up of 8 lower order themes (Figure 3; See Appendix H for full summary).

**EA Characteristics.** Students described qualities about the EA itself that contributed to the development and transfer of skill. Extensive discussion centred on how the EA could create an environment conducive to participants' psychological wellbeing, induced by both the nature of the EA and associated significant others. This directly affected skill development and transfer and was collectively identified as an *adaptive motivational climate*. Primarily, it was believed that if the EA was enjoyable, learning was facilitated. One individual reflects, "when you do [EA] obviously you can learn easier and quicker, especially if you enjoy it" (Life and Environmental Sciences, performance EA). Although this is subject to an individual's preference, other less personal factors also affected an individual's satisfaction with participation. For example, enjoyment was also created via excellent facilities as "the facilities are fantastic which makes it a lot easier as well because it's a lot more enjoyable" (Engineering and Physical Sciences, performance EA) and "the environment must be welcoming" (Life and Environmental Sciences, voluntary prosocial and academic). Learning was also facilitated through low pressure within the EA, which was created via having no consequence for failure. This was explained through "nobody's getting you, getting at you for not picking up something straight away or something like that which I think is really helpful" (Engineering and Physical Sciences, employment). This allows a participant to work at their desired, and most appropriate, speed of learning, which should optimise an individual's development. Further to this, it was also suggested

that the most appropriate learning style for the EA participant should also be considered. For some individuals, that might be having practical, also known as kinaesthetic, approach; for example, one individual felt that, “anything you do that’s practical makes it easier for you to develop transferable skills” (Social Sciences, voluntary prosocial, performance and academic EA).

The *adaptive motivational climate* is not only created by elements inherent within the EA itself, but the contribution of significant others. Encouragement within feedback from the coach could also provide the required confidence to develop and transfer a skill. This is important because “some people might not be aware that they’re kind of may be really good at a lead on something so maybe its down to a coach to say you’ve got a really good... like giving feedback, saying you’ve got really good leadership skills and so make them more confident [sic]” (Medical and Dental Sciences, performance EA). One individual also felt that having established links to the university through significant others in their department would assist their development. Specifically, they discussed that they have “been doing like some student rep stuff so I’m more connected in my department and my course, which helps with my academic work so makes it easier” (Engineering and Physical Sciences, performance and organised recreational EA).

In addition to these general features appropriate to the majority of the participant body, there are also designated roles within EAs that can only apply to the minority of individuals. Some students thought that by assuming a *leadership role* requiring an individual to take charge of a situation or group of individuals, maximised skill development and transfer. Through “being forced into a leadership role particularly helps you to develop transferable skills” (Social Sciences, voluntary prosocial EA) and “if you’re the team captain or something like that then that makes it easier to use it in my academic work” (Life and Environmental Sciences, performance and employment EA).

An overarching lower order theme discussed was the *similarity of the EA and transfer environment*, which directly relates to the transfer of learning. Specifically, this theme is reflective of

near transfer, which occurs when the learning and application environments are almost identical and is the most obtainable form of transfer (Brown, 2010). To illustrate this near transfer, “the writers’ society like I do law, its quite helpful in varying the writing that I do because a lot of law writing” (Arts and Law, performance EA).

**Personal Characteristics.** A number of qualities about the individual are also important factors to skill development and transfer. The most integral personal characteristic to skill development and transfer was the adoption of a *learning and transfer mindset*. Before an individual can experience the positive outcomes associated with participation, they must firstly be able to adequately learn the related skills. One individual discussed that “A quality about me that’s made it easy to develop transferable skills is approachability and willingness to learn” (Life and Environmental Sciences, performance and organised recreational EA) and another indicates that “I think I learn quite quickly, so if you put me in a situation where I need to learn a transferrable skill I think I grasp them quite quickly” (Engineering and Physical Sciences, employment and academic EA). Therefore, this willingness to learn, combined with the ability to absorb information quickly, will facilitate skill development. Once a given skill is adopted within an individual’s wider skill set, the potential to implement it in another environment is present. The ability to do so is contingent on the recognition of similarity of EA and transfer environments, where being able to observe the similarities between the learning and transfer environment enables the transfer of skill. One student demonstrated their ability to perceive the similarity “in the law degree seminars play quite a big role with the degree, so groups of 10 working as a team, talking together, I do rugby, that’s working as a team, functioning as a team” (Arts and Law, performance EA). Both of these elements could be optimised through experience within the EA by participating from early stage in life where you are more receptive and now more used to participating in a given EA. One individual said “because I’ve done extra curricular activities from an early age, I’ve been able to use them and develop transferable skills. If you’ve only started to

do extra curricular activities later on in your life it may be harder to do” (Arts and Law, employment and caring responsibilities).

Supplementing this core mindset are *positive mental qualities*, which also facilitate the development and transfer of skills. One individual emphasised the importance of innate enjoyment; “because I’m quite interested in my subjects and I’m also quite interested in the activities then it makes it easier to, if I do learn any skills, to help me in my studies” (Engineering and Physical Sciences, organised recreational EA). Once an individual wants to develop and transfer the skills from EA, they must now have the confidence and self-assurance that one can execute this task. Without this confidence, the resultant shyness and inability to talk to new people can act as a significant barrier to this process. This was evidence as one individual attributed their ability to develop and transfer skills to “I am quite a confident person, I think that probably helps” (Engineering and Physical Sciences, performance EA). In contrast, another individual thought that “I can be quite shy so even though I’ve learnt a skill I might not necessarily have the confidence to then put it into use somewhere else” (Arts and Law, voluntary prosocial EA). It is also important to recognise that both the skills learnt in EA and the environment in which students choose to apply them can vary widely. Therefore, students thought that an individual must be adaptable enough to be able to alter skill application to different situations illustrated in “you kind of have to be malleable enough to take on different roles in that and that’s definitely helped me in my workload when we do study groups” (Arts and Law, performance EA)

*Social skills* were also discussed as the personal capacity to be approachable, have a willingness to engage with new people and exhibit patience and perception, also facilitated transfer. One specific example comes from an individual who communicated that “I think I’m quite a good person at reading people and understanding what people are like so I can transfer... like in my extracurricular activities I can see what people are doing and like my leadership qualities and stuff like that and then I can transfer those skills across to my academic work, particularly in the group work” (Engineering and Physical



Sciences, performance EA).

**University Characteristics.** Finally, students discussed qualities about the university that are important to the development and transfer of skill. These themes were predominantly initiatives that the university could implement. Firstly, the physical and social proximity associated with *freshers living together* permitted easy interaction to share experiences. When asked about the contributory environmental qualities to skill development and transfer, one student noted that “it’s easier that all the freshers are together so that means that you can talk about your things, you all live together and I think living in halls makes it easier because you are all living together and you are going through the same sorts of experiences” (Arts and Law, performance EA). This suggests an element of social support and the benefit of verbalising the thought processes associated with skill development and transfer.

Secondly, students identified that *external assistance* from key areas at the university that could facilitate their skill development and transfer. Generally, students thought it would be advantageous to introduce sessions that explain how EA can be utilised. This would facilitate their understanding of transfer and make the transfer process more explicit. One individual thought that to “have a session on how you can use extra curricular activities to your advantage” (Arts and Law, employment and caring responsibilities) might be useful. This could be implemented and further contextualised through the careers department, as one student thought that “it could be more helpful in the Careers Department; they could do a bit more perhaps” (Arts and Law, performance and organised recreational EA).

Another potential area to implement such initiatives would be through personal tutors. The tutoring system provides the first port of call for academic advice and support, and so would be ideally place to provide skill development and transfer advice. Personal tutors should be instructed to discuss the EA and degree balance, as “[Personal tutors] could maybe do a bit more in order to help balance because I don’t really know anyone who I can specifically talk to about being able to balance doing for example sport and my degree” (Arts and Law, performance EA).

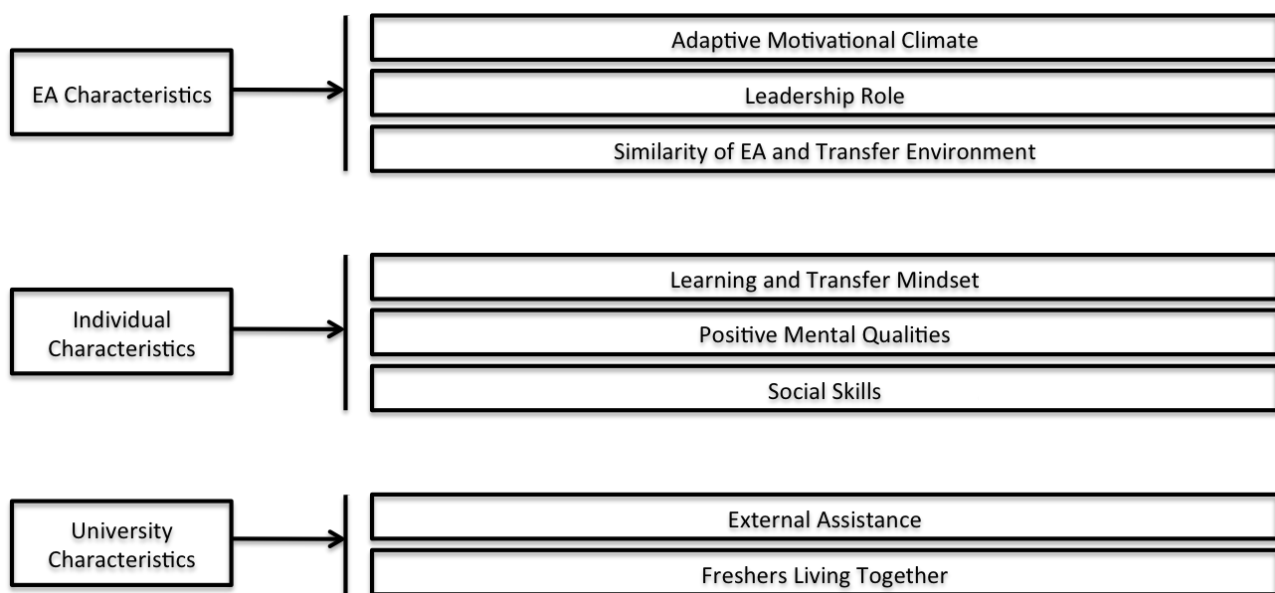


Figure 3. Factors affecting skill development and transfer.

### Discussion

This study used a diary room method within a university context to explore student perceptions of the possible effects of EA participation on academic work and future employment. It also investigated the factors that are perceived to affect the extent of skill development and subsequent transfer into academic work. Student responses were extensive, detailing a number of insightful themes; these informed two overarching thematic maps on *Outcomes of Participation in EA* and *Factors affecting the Development and Transfer of Skills*. A number of students also spontaneously discussed factors that influenced EA participation. Although this was outside the scope of this thesis, we acknowledge that encouraging participation is a key priority if any benefits of EA are to be realised. As such, these additional data have been summarised in Appendix I.

The students' perceptions of the *Outcomes of Participation in EA* were predominantly in support of the developmental model (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). Students discussed the development of *positive mental qualities*, including the *drive to succeed* and *relaxation*, utilised most effectively within academic work, and *independence*, which was discussed in relation to future employment only. These findings are in line with the developmental experiences identified by Hansen and Larson (2002)

in the Youth Experience Survey (YES), a self reported measure for prevalence of particular experiences in a given EA. For example, the *drive to succeed* described an individual's ability to motivate themselves, keep focused within an activity and demonstrate competitiveness. This parallels Hansen and Larson's "emotional regulation", which includes handling anger, fear, anxiety and stress. *Relaxation* is also in support of "emotional regulation", as one dimension of how an individual may handle stress. *Independence* is more generic than constructs highlighted in the YES, but is important within developmental opportunities, especially the first year of university. The transition to university is often involves a move from home and also presents three main areas for adjustment, including an individual's academic, social and emotional states (Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie, 2007). It is possible that the decreased social support from friends and family makes these adjustments more problematic, and therefore independence is integral to adjustment and hence first year success. If EAs can instil independence, then this might be an important way to maximise a student's experience in the first year. Students also described *intrapersonal transferable skills*, including *literacy* and *generic study skills*, including organisation, problem solving and memory, useful for academic work and future employment, and *creativity* within future employment. *Literacy* and *creativity* are identified as "cognitive skills" in the YES. *Generic study skills* also map on to elements of "initiative experiences" from the YES, such as organisation and problem solving. However, improvements to memory that were identified in our study have not previously been identified as potential benefits of EA by the YES. *Interpersonal transferable skills* were characterised by *group work*, contributing to both academic work and future employment. This is similar to "teamwork and social skills" in the YES. The YES is not, however, a complete list of developmental opportunities in EA (Hansen & Larson, 2002). Our data has supplemented the YES, adding further detail into existing categories and suggesting that students are utilising these developmental experiences to develop the associate skill and use them in an alternative environment.

Although the population as a whole identified many potential benefits of EA, there was a cohort of students who reported that EAs had either no effect or a negative effect on their academic work. These comments were often consistent with the zero-sum model (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002) in which EAs are seen as in competition with studies for a limited time and effort resources. Where EAs were perceived as demanding, students noted that the *time commitment*, and *fatigue and injury* had a detrimental effect; in contrast, other students noted that EAs had no effect because there is *no conflict between EAP and academic work*. When these students were prompted with possible examples of skills, most agreed that these were skills that it would be possible to develop, although they were rarely able to elaborate further. This may indicate that they had not had time to reflect on these options, or could suggest that they were agreeing on the basis of social desirability, a result of the need for approval and/or situational demands (Collins, Shattell, & Thomas, 2005). In addition, even students who felt they did develop skills were sometimes unable to articulate them beyond a superficial description. This was particularly apparent in the *employment application and awareness* theme, in which those discussing *CV development* in particular lacked detailed explanations. This suggests that the students had a limited understanding of how skills developed in EA could be useful in employment, or that they don't have the skills to verbalise these ideas effectively. Finally, a few individuals voiced that EA has *no effect* because the *skill is developed but not transferred*.

Secondly, students discussed *Factors Affecting the Development and Transfer of Skills*; this was, rather predictably, dominated by students who participated in EA and believed that they had developed transferable skills. Once inductively analysed, it was later noted that these results had independently aligned themselves to the "Trainee Characteristics", "Training Design", and "Work Environment outlined in Baldwin and Ford's model (1988) (see Figure 1). As well as providing a structure for discussion this also provides evidence for this model's utility in a higher education context.

The *individual characteristics* identified by our students appear equivalent to the “Trainee Characteristics” within the Baldwin and Ford model. For example, our themes of *positive mental qualities* and *social skills* encompass the characteristics “personality” and “motivation” identified in the previous model; our data suggests that individuals who effectively develop and transfer skills are self-assured, and are able to adapt skills to a given situation and to interact effectively with others. Our participants also noted the advantages of having an innate interest in EA participation and academic work, which is a characteristic of intrinsic, or self-determined, motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). As more self-determined motivation can reduce the probability of drop out (Ryan, Plant, & O’Malley, 1995; Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992), it is likely that such an approach would lead to a more committed involvement and greater potential for skill development. This may be particularly apparent as *positive mental qualities* including confidence and motivation, as well as *social skills*, are discussed as both outcomes of participation in EA, as well as factors that make it more likely that skills are developed and transferred. As such, it is possible that this creates a positive feedback loop whereby participation enhances these attributes, which in turn make it more likely that a participant will adhere to the activity and to yield the possible benefits.

One aspect of Baldwin and Ford’s “Trainee Characteristics” that was not supported by our data was the importance of “ability”. Although not clearly defined in the paper, this relates to early research that suggests that aptitude tests can predict successful training outcomes (e.g. Robertson & Downs, 1979; Tubiana & Ben-Shakhar, 1982). The lack of discussion of innate abilities in our dataset could be interpreted as supportive of a growth mindset where appropriate effort can develop an individual’s basic skill set, rather than indicating a more fixed model, where development relies on intelligence that is assumed to be innate and stable (Dweck, 2006). This proposition is supported by our identification of a *learning and transfer mindset* as a predictor of skill development and transfer. This theme was characterised by a willingness to learn and an understanding of transfer opportunities. This is

reminiscent of a deep approach to learning (Marton & Saljo, 1976), which has been shown to elicit higher levels of the transfer of learning (Murphy & Tyler, 2005). This theme also included discussions of the benefits of being able to recognise similarities between EA and transfer environments, and therefore identify opportunities for transfer of skills. This is reflective of the classical transfer approach in which Judd (1908) argued that an individual's awareness of the similarities, or common elements, between the learning and transfer environment is what determines transfer (cited in Lobato, 2006). Some students suggested that this mindset was facilitated by more sustained participation in EA over a period of time, implicating an individual's stage of learning. Hinds, Patterson and Pfeffer (2001) demonstrated indirectly the benefit of expertise, and hence more extensive knowledge, to the transfer of learning. It was shown that expert instructors facilitated the transfer of learning of novices to an electronic circuit-wiring task over beginner instructors. Overall, this theme suggests that students should be given support to develop their ability to recognise, and utilise, opportunities for skill development and transfer. Similarly, as discussed more extensively in Appendix I, more support about how to sustain EA participation effectively, particularly when managing heavy workloads, could help students to balance their academic work and EA participation effectively.

A second factor thought to influence skill development and transfer were *EA characteristics*. This concept shares common ideas to "Training Design" within the Baldwin and Ford model. Students noted that the *similarity of EA and transfer environment* influenced the extent to which skills were likely to be transferred. Our data, and previous literature, suggests that when these two environments are similar, transfer occurs more easily; this is known as near transfer (Brown, 2010). However, Brown (2010) specified far transfer to be more important, especially for educators that want to influence beyond their immediate environment as it allows learning to have a greater overall impact into wider aspects of life. This suggests it is more beneficial to facilitate students observing the similarities rather than making EA and academic work more alike. Baldwin and Ford's model discusses specific training

design features, such as whole or part learning, whereas our students discussed more general design features which created an *adaptive motivational climate*. This included the EA being enjoyable, presenting no consequence for failure, being practical, having links to the university, and the EA leader providing feedback. This climate reflects an optimal learning environment described by Deci and Ryan (2000). Their work suggest that humans have three basic psychological needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy, that must be satisfied to permit psychological well being and internally regulated motivation. Our participants' description of an *adaptive motivational climate* reflects the importance of competence and relatedness, but doesn't discuss autonomy explicitly. However, as EAs are voluntary, the decision to participate is already a relatively autonomous behaviour. As such, our data support the notion that an *adaptive motivational climate* would enhance skill development and transfer.

Another characteristic of the EA environment is the opportunity to take on a *leadership role*. Our data suggested that being offered a chance, or being encouraged, to take on a position of responsibility may promote the development of transferable skills. In support of this idea, other research has indicated that the adoption of a lead role within an EA is associated with greater developmental benefits (Hansen & Larson, 2007). This is a potential result of the responsibility held (Eccles & Templeton, 2002; Hanks & Eckland, 1978), as well as the heightened immersion and investment (Hansen & Larson, 2007).

Finally, *university characteristics* were identified as an important predictor of skill development; this concept is parallel to the 'Work Environment' discussed by the Baldwin and Ford model. The current data detailed the *external assistance* that they felt would be useful for the university to provide. This included implementing a session on skill transfer to explain how EAs can be utilised within academic work, e.g. discussing the similarities between the EA and academic environments. This and other exchanges of information, such as how to balance EA and academic

work, could utilise already established university places for support, including the careers department and personal tutors. In addition, our data mentioned *freshers' living together* as an opportunity to share experiences, which suggested a role for social support in skill development. As well as encouraging this form of peer learning, universities also need to consider the increasing number of students who choose, or are necessitated, to live at home and away from the direct university environment. During the 2011/12 academic year, this was the case for approximately 19 percent of students (HESA, 2012). In contrast, there was limited discussion of the wider social environment. For example, significant others such as family members, spouse, role models, employers, co-workers etc. are not mentioned when they could be valuable sources of support (Abbey, Abramis, & Caplan, 1985). Perceived global social support is an important protective factor within an undergraduate degree, with this being positively correlated to academic, personal-emotional, and social adjustment in the first semester (Tao, Dong, Pratt, Hunsberger, & Pancer, 2000).

Overall, within this thematic map, it was noted that skill development was discussed more extensively than transfer. This could suggest that development is simply more of a priority for our students or that participants lack understanding of transfer. Further, given that EA and academic work are concurrent in this context, it is possible that transfer occurs at a more subconscious level permitting less detailed explanation. Although it is not possible to determine the reason for this from our data, this lack of differentiation, taken with the relatively limited examples given by any individual student, suggests that students may have a limited understanding of the issues surrounding skill development and, particularly, transfer. It is possible that this reflects low levels of self-regulation. Zimmerman (2002) discussed self-regulation as a goal focused, proactive learning process of three cyclical phases including forethought, performance and self-reflection. Given that a student-centred, independent learning approach is promoted within higher education (Torenbeek, Jansen, & Hofman, 2011), we can postulate that self-regulation is an important component of this. Self-regulation has been shown as an



important predictor of adjustment to the first year at university in terms of depression, anxiety and stress (Park, Edmondson, & Lee, 2012). As the Baldwin and Ford model suggests that the factors that affect skill development are likely to also affect skill transfer, the themes identified in this study would be a useful starting point for these discussions.

While this study is a key step in examining EA outcomes and how to utilise these outcomes in higher education, it is important to highlight a number of limitations. Firstly, although rich data was obtained overall, some transcripts lacked detail. This may reflect a lack of understanding, but may also be a limitation of the diary room technique in this context. In the previous study using this technique, participants were attending a course that discussed ideas such as group work and the transfer of learning, whereas our participants were undergoing normal daily activities on campus (Cooley et al. (2013)). It is likely that more detailed responses will be achieved when participants have already been primed to think about the issues, compared to more spontaneous responses. This issue is heightened by the inability to establish rapport with, probe and encourage the participant during diary room entries, which differs from more traditional qualitative techniques. More explicit, step-by-step questions could therefore be more appropriate in the current setting, as the responses required are shorter to maintain attention and guide the participant through self-reflection. Alternatively, follow up focus groups might be beneficial. However, if the purpose of the research is to collect a wide variety of readily accessible opinions, then the diary room technique is likely to be very useful. A further limitation of the Diary Room that might impact the detail and/or content of the entries are the self-presentational concerns that participants might have. These individuals with concerns actively engage in strategies to manipulate the manner in which others perceive them, which resonates in all life domains (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). As such, individuals may firstly choose not to participate through fear of creating the wrong impression or alter their responses in the diary room accordingly. We addressed this to a certain extent by allowing individuals to be audio rather than video recorded; however it is impossible to eradicate

this issue as it is embedded within all self-reported data. It is important to consider alongside our findings that people who do choose to participate may present a particular aspect of themselves, rather than fully disclosing. However, we would speculate that self-presentation may be less of a concern in the diary room compared to tools such as interviews and focus groups as the participants are in isolation during their response to questions. This may remove some fear of judgement as there is no immediate feedback for participants to experience. It would be interesting to explore whether the diary room could, therefore, be a useful tool when discussing sensitive topics.

Secondly, the diversity of views within our findings has been limited through participant selection. Although we moved the diary room daily, it was exclusively on campus and we were only able to stratify our recruitment on visible demographics. This limited the inclusion of individuals who spend less time on campus, such as commuters and part time students, and meant that we were unable to selectively recruit people with non-visible characteristics that may affect adaptation to university, such as learning difficulties and being first generation students. Future research would therefore benefit from selectively recruiting populations that are more at risk of dropout. Finally, an inherent limitation in this literature is that EA participation is self-selecting. Participation is voluntary and, as such, individuals who take part in EA may differ significantly in personality, previous experiences etc. to those who don't, which can limit generalisation (Larson et al., 2006). However, in this study, non-participants were still included, which allowed us to also observe their unique viewpoint.

This research highlights some important practical implications for higher education to maximise the benefits of EA. EAs are often kept separate from the academic pursuit, but our research illustrates students view them as beneficial within academic work and future employment. To maximise this benefit, the way higher education structures and supports EAs could be further enhanced. Firstly with regards to structure, EAs are often student run, allowing a leadership role to benefit students. It may, therefore, be advisable to ensure that a range of students have the opportunity to take on these roles.

Secondly, universities and EA providers, should be encouraged to promote a need satisfying and adaptive motivational environment by using evidence based techniques such as encouraging initiative via involving participants in decision making and leadership roles, promoting task orientated goals, providing meaningful feedback, involving participants in self-evaluation and minimising extrinsic rewards and pressure (Epstein, 1989). Thirdly, promoting a deeper learning approach would also be advantageous to the transfer of learning, which could be achieved using strategies such as enthusiasm and empathy displayed by the leader, requiring or explaining skill application in another context and problem solving (Entwistle, 2000). These could be communicated via guidelines, rather than regulations, for EAs, as this avoids the university overexerting control as it still allows extensive student involvement.

To support the EA externally, our data indicated four areas that university could more broadly improve. Firstly, our findings suggest that higher education might benefit from communicating the potential value that EA holds within academic success, as well as how to utilise this value through the transfer of learning. This could familiarise students with EA benefits, what transfer is, its importance, identifying the similarity between environments and how it might be personally applicable. Secondly, educating students on effective time management skills would help minimise the perceived conflict between EA and academic work and hence permit participation. Time management is a major difficulty within students' first year experiences (Gibney, Moore, Murphy, & O'Sullivan, 2011), and accordingly higher education should engage more actively in developing time management skills in first year students (Van der Meer, Jansen, & Torenbeek, 2010). These could be communicated through methods such as seminars, online resources, and personal tutoring/mentoring systems. Thirdly, student responses highlighted a lack of self-regulation. This might mean that students should be educated on the process of self-regulation and familiarised with strategies which promote this practice, including tools such as Johari's window, reflective learning journals and critical incident analysis. Finally, our

students highlighted social support to be important within the development and transfer of skills. Attention should therefore be paid to ways that universities could encourage a variety of informal mentoring support opportunities, with peers or other appropriate people; this may be particularly important for living-at-home, and/or mature students, who may miss the relatively spontaneous opportunities provided by shared housing.

This research is also a good basis for further studies to be conducted. Further qualitative research through case studies would be useful to observe EA effects throughout the year as a student develops, has varying commitments/workloads and during exams. In addition to this, as the Baldwin and Ford model reflected our data so well, exploration into the “Trainee Characteristics” to determine the individual characteristics of the students, e.g. personality and motivation, and the subsequent impact these have upon transfer would be interesting. In addition, the “Generalisation and Maintenance” aspect of this model could be further examined through questioning the university alumni to understand the impact of EAs had upon academic work and has in their employment. Future research should explore beyond student self reported data. Our results are an outcome of students’ unique perceptions, shaped by their own personal experiences within EA and education. To obtain a more thorough understanding of this area, triangulation of findings could be used to question EA leaders and university lecturers on their perceived value of transfer and how, if at all, transfer is promoted. It is also possible to further explore this research quantitatively through investigating how EA participation is associated with developmental experiences, perceptions of transition, and hard academic outcomes such as end of year grade average and credits to re-sit.

To summarise, this study has demonstrated that students predominantly take a developmental view of EA participation (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002), in which a wide variety of skills and qualities are fostered that are applicable to the academic and employment settings. Importantly, student views contributed to an understanding of how EAP can be utilised most effectively, by discussing the factors

that affect the development of skills within the EA itself as well as the transfer of these skills into an academic setting. However, students demonstrated limited ability to articulate more complex ideas, particularly those associated with the transfer of learning. These ideas provide important practical implications for higher education and support further exploration of the relationship between EAs and the development of transferable skills in higher education. In addition, this study has also further validated the use of the diary room in a university campus setting.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Audit Trail

Date	Task	Done by	Process gone through	Outcome of task
w/c 5 <sup>th</sup> November 2012	DR1 data collection	Main researcher and several research assistants	4 days of qualitative data collection using the DR technique.	Data collected.
w/c 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2012	Data transcription	KATTS professional transcription services	Videos sent for professional transcription	Transcripts produced.
w/c 19 <sup>th</sup> November 2012	Data familiarisation	Independently by main, second and third researchers	Checking transcripts are correct, watching videos and rereading transcripts	Ensured data was transcribed accurately. Increased understanding of the tone and meaning etc. of the data, allowing more accurate and effective in the initial coding generation and search for themes.
w/c 26 <sup>th</sup> November 2012 – w/c 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2012	Q4 analysis (EA question)	Independently by main, second and third researchers	Initial coding generation, construction of themes and definitions created for each theme.	Overall analysis and structure produced by the all three researcher independently.
w/c 7 <sup>th</sup> January 2013	Consensual validation	Main, second and third researchers	Review of codes and themes.	Overall agreement on what constitutes a code and the structure of the themes.
w/c 7 <sup>th</sup> January 2013	Consensual validation	Main, second and third researchers	Discussion of definitions	Definitions further refined and simplified.
w/c 21 <sup>st</sup> January 2013 (25 <sup>th</sup> specifically)	Peer Review	Main, second and third researchers presenting to four other expert researchers external to the process thus far	Discussion of codes, themes, structure and definitions.	General structure agreed, but collapsing occurred at the lowest level themes, as some only differed on a very minor point irrelevant to our research question. This ensured theoretical parsimony. Definitions further refined and simplified, ensuring that they were not going beyond the data, through using words and phrases from the quotes.
w/c 28 <sup>th</sup> January 2013	Peer Review	Main, second and third researchers presenting to four other expert researchers external to the process thus far	Review structure change from previous meeting (collapse at lower order themes). Further discussion of codes, themes, structure and definitions to a more detailed extent.	Previous meeting outcomes agreed. In addition, codes were more specifically looked at to see their fit in the overall agreed structure. This resulted in some minor shifting of codes into different themes were participant emphasis was ambiguous, but did not result in the creation of any new themes. Definitions were also further refined to be more succinct.

w/c 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2013	DR2 data collection	Main researcher and several research assistants	4 days of qualitative data collection using the DR technique.	Data collected.
w/c 11 <sup>th</sup> February 2013	Data transcription	KATTS professional transcription services	Videos sent for professional transcription	Transcripts produced.
w/c 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2013	Data familiarisation	Main researcher.	Checking transcripts are correct, watching videos and rereading transcripts	Ensured data was transcribed accurately. Increased understanding of the tone and meaning etc. of the data, allowing more accurate and effective in the initial coding generation and search for themes.
w/c 8 <sup>th</sup> April 2013	Initial coding generation and search for themes	Main researcher.	Questions were analysed sequentially to ensure that the context of the answer was not lost.	Contributions to the overall analysis and structure produced by the first researcher only.
w/c 15 <sup>th</sup> April 2013	Initial coding generation and search for themes	Main researcher.	Questions were analysed sequentially to ensure that the context of the answer was not lost.	Contributions to the overall analysis and structure produced by the first researcher only.
w/c 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2013	Review of themes and theme definitions	Main researcher.	Theme structure was scrutinised by the researcher and definitions created for each theme which were strongly linked to the data.	Overall analysis and structure produced by the first researcher only.
w/c 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2013 and w/c 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2013	Second researcher analysis for 20% of the data.	Second researcher – NB this individual was different to that of the first DR analysis.	Previous four steps executed by the second researcher.	Overall analysis and structure produced by the second researcher only.
w/c 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2013, one meeting	Consensual validation	Main and second researcher.	Discussions of codes and themes with second coder of q1	Overall agreement on what constitutes a code i.e. the same bits of data had been put together to make up each code.  However, this stage of discussion revealed two different approaches to creating themes to this question i.e. how the codes were grouped.  The main researcher grouped codes 'by statement', where all agreeing statements for theory 1 were grouped together, all disagreeing statements for theory 1 were grouped etc.



				<p>Researcher two on the other hand grouped codes 'by case', where each individual was identified to agree with statement 1, agree with statement two or agree with both. Then their subsequent comments were kept in this higher order theme. This created one difference with individuals who said that they agreed with both theories. These participant statements, whether agreeing or disagreeing with statement one or two, were kept separate from individuals that just overall agreed with statement 1 or 2.</p> <p>It was therefore decided to employ a combination of these methods. Data was analysed using both strategies and then data was presented using a 'by statement' approach, but highlighting any 'by case' differences, i.e. where there any themes that were unique to those individuals that agreed with both theories.</p> <p>Again there was overall agreement on what constitutes a code. There were minor amendments in the structure to further solidify internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity.</p>
w/c 24 <sup>th</sup> June 2013, daily meetings	Consensual validation	Main and second researcher.	Discussions of codes and themes with second coder of q2-4	
11 <sup>th</sup> July 2013	Peer Review	Main and second researchers presenting to three other expert researchers external to the process thus far	Review overall structure organised by questions administered	<p>A progressive focusing approach was initiated. The structure of question one and two were reviewed and it became apparent that to ensure theoretical parsimony and draw practical implications from the analysis more data appropriate questions needed to be investigated.</p> <p>These questions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What factors affect participation?</li> <li>- What are the outcomes of EAP?</li> <li>- What factors affect the development of skill?</li> <li>- What factors affect the transference of skill?</li> </ul> <p>This restructure allowed the integration of the results of DR1 analysis of academic work outcomes into 'What are the outcomes of EAP?'. New structure was developed, however there was one issue with important implications. Participants did not distinguish well between the development and transference of skill; therefore this had to be collapsed into</p>
16 <sup>th</sup> July 2013	Reassess with second researcher	Main and second researchers.	Alter overall structure to new questions	

23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2013	Peer review	Main and second researchers presenting to three other expert researchers external to the process thus far	Examine ‘What factors affect participation?’	<p>one higher order theme.</p> <p>Highest order themes didn’t quite have external heterogeneity and internal homogeneity. This was evident as lower order themes could be placed in more than one higher order theme and related constructs were in different higher order themes. Therefore amendments in highest order structure occurred. Structure of barriers and enablers was introduced.</p> <p>Outcomes –</p> <p>The highest order themes were removed that kept academic work and employment outcomes separate. This also meant that lower order themes collapsed so that academic and employment outcomes were not separated. The outcomes association with academic work or employment was recognised at definition level instead.</p> <p>The second order themes of inter and intra personal skills, employment applications and awareness, negative effect and no effect were shifted up to the highest order themes</p> <p>Development and outcomes –</p> <p>To achieve continuity of highest order themes, characteristics of EA, individual and university were implemented, with the agreed lower order themes moved as appropriate.</p>
2 <sup>nd</sup> August 2013	Peer review	Main and second researchers presenting to three other expert researchers external to the process thus far	Examine ‘What are the outcomes of EAP?’ and ‘What factors affect the development and transference of skills?’	<p>Further review of outcomes highlighted that some lower order themes had a too small difference to be warranted their own theme, so were collapsed upon supervisor agreement.</p> <p>Some higher order themes were harder to communicate the defining feature to ensure that themes could only fit into one higher order theme. These were more tightly defined and ‘positive mental qualities’ was integrated.</p>
w/c 19 <sup>th</sup> August 2013	Write up phase	Main researcher	Review of themes	

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## Appendix B

### The Diary Room Tent



## Appendix C

### Participant Information Sheet

#### Assessing Transferable Skills in Higher Education *Participant Information Sheet*

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study evaluating the development and use of transferable skills in education and other life domains, and whether these skills predict successful transition, retention, and attainment in Higher Education.

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

The transition to university is significant, and the first year experience provides a strong foundation for success in the following years. This study will examine what factors promote a positive first year experience, and the individual and situational factors that influence the development of academic and transferable skills. This understanding will help us to further develop future interventions to enhance the student experience and skill development.

#### **Why have I been invited and do I have to take part?**

We are recruiting first year undergraduate students from across the whole university. After reading this information sheet, you can ask any questions about the study. If you agree to take part, we would like you to complete the consent form. There is no compulsion to take part.

#### **What will I have to do?**

A diary room has been set up where you can privately share your thoughts about university, extracurricular participation and personal development. We will provide you with some prompt cards to give you some ideas of what you might like to discuss, but it is really your opportunity to tell us what you think. A camera is set up in the room to record your diary entry; you will simply read out the questions from the prompt card and then answer the question in your own words. You only need to answer the questions that you are happy to talk about.

#### **Can I withdraw once the research has started?**

You may withdraw at any time, without any explanation or negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw from the study please contact Dr Victoria Burns or Dr Jennifer Cumming (contact details provided below) to inform us of your decision. The deadline for withdrawing from the study is 3 months after your diary room entry. If you choose to withdraw, your data will be destroyed and not included in the study.

#### **What will happen to the results of the research study?**

By participating in this study, you are also agreeing that your results may be used for scientific purposes, including publication in scientific journals, so long as your anonymity is maintained. You will not be individually identified in any publication. There are no known risks associated with participation in this research.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) raw and processed data from this investigation will be kept for a period of ten years following completion of the study. Computer files containing raw and processed data will be kept securely and will only be accessed by the study investigators. After this time period, all the data collected (including photographs, audio and video files) will be destroyed.

A brief summary presenting the results and findings will be available upon request at the end of the study.

#### **Further information and contact details**

For further information, please contact: Dr Victoria Burns 0121 414 8104  
Dr Jennifer Cumming 0121 414 2877

If you have any further concerns about your study skills and personal development, please see your personal tutor within your school/department and/or the University of Birmingham's already existing resources for study skills and academic support (<http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/support/study.shtml>).

## Appendix D

## Participant Consent Form

## Assessing Transferable Skills in Higher Education

### *Participant Consent Form*

**** (VERY IMPORTANT) ****	
Your date of birth: ____ / ____ / ____ D M Y	Your number of siblings: ____ #

	Initial to consent
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet, and have had the opportunity to ask questions to my satisfaction.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time before the deadline described on the information sheet without giving any reason or my rights being affected.	
I understand that I can choose not to answer a question if I wish without giving any reason or my rights being affected.	
I give consent for the data that I provide to be used for research and promotional purposes	
I give consent to be audio and video recorded during the diary room entry, and for these to be kept securely for analysis.	
I understand that any data collected about me will be kept confidential, and that any published research will contain changed names.	
I agree to take part in the above study.	

Name of Participant

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Email address (Please print clearly. If you give your email address, we will send you information about the study.)

## **Appendix E**

### **Definitions provided to participants**

We define transferable skills as those skills that are learnt in one setting that are useful in other settings, including but not limited to group work, communication, leadership, planning, time management, and problem-solving.

Extracurricular activity participation includes anything that you do outside of your academic study, which are planned rather than spontaneous. This may be formally structured/organised activities such as part time employment, clubs, and societies. It can also include more social and solitary activities, such as spending time with friends, reading or playing musical instruments.





**Part 2: Extracurricular activities:** Please indicate to what extent you have participated in the following activities during **the previous year**. For example, “regularly” indicates twice or more a week over the year or for a considerable period of time (eg a month or more full time), whereas “often” means every week or so, or for a shorter sustained period of time (eg a few weeks full time).

In the past year, I have been involved in:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Regularly
<b>Voluntary prosocial activities</b> (e.g. volunteering, community activities)	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Performance activities</b> (e.g. competitive sports/dance, participation in theatre productions)	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Organised recreational activities</b> (e.g. non-competitive organised sports/arts, societies, music practice etc)	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Employment activities</b> (e.g. paid work, internships, work experience)	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Caring responsibilities</b> (e.g. looking after children, dependent parents etc)	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Organisational and leadership activities</b> (e.g. committee participation, event organisation)	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Extracurricular academic activities</b> (e.g. tutoring, student representation, ambassador roles, study groups)	1	2	3	4	5

## Appendix G

### Extracurricular Activity Outcomes Summary

Higher Order Theme	Lower Order Theme
<b>Positive Mental Qualities</b> Psychological characteristics that promoted an active and appropriate engagement with challenging situations.	<b>Drive to Succeed</b> An individuals pursuit of academic and employment success whereby they implement mental strategies such as focus, concentration and competitiveness because there is a keenness to work and a strong desire to do ones best present. <i>'it definitely helps with like commitment so if you want to carry on with your extra curricular activities it could also help you with your academic activities like you need to continue with something, if there's some work or something you don't want to do.'</i> <i>'I think it prepares you very well for future employment because you develop skills with extracurricular activities such as teamwork, leadership, meeting new people, competitiveness, which in future employment is very helpful because obviously it's competitive.'</i> <i>'if you partake in sports you could... and you like go for a competition and you guys come first or that sort of thing will obviously help you out for job applications and for different... it relates to what you want to do in particular.'</i> <i>'when I do something else other than academics my mind keeps fresh and I don't get bored of just studying, you know?'</i> <i>'The only extra curricular activity I really do includes karate and other martial arts. So they have a great impact on my academic work to improve my concentration'</i> <i>'And the most influence I think to play those games or join some clubs, activities, is that it make us more focused when we're not doing that, more focused on our research work.'</i>
	<b>Independence</b> The ability to carry out tasks and execute skills without external assistance and taking responsibility for ones own behaviour. This is underpinned by self-assurance in task execution, particularly in relation to interacting with new people, taking risks and trying new things. <i>'being voted onto the committee of that society is probably going to help me with my teamwork skills, another thing that employers like and it will give me a degree of independence I suppose, show that I can go off and work on my own and get stuff done.'</i> <i>'especially going back to the air cadets, it's a military organisation, so you have to take orders from people you might not like or you might not agree with but you know you just have to get on with, which is the same in employment, you might not like your boss but you still have to take orders from them, you can't argue, and it means it teaches you discipline, there's lots of discipline involved'</i> <i>'being able to take direction and receive constructive criticism'</i> <i>'I guess it teaches you to be quite responsible with your time and in the way you behave as well.'</i> <i>'Also I'd say, for example, for socials, social side of rugby, part of the initiations is that you have to be confident in speaking, introduce yourself, which can be directly transferred into presentational skills at university, which we have to take part in, for example in the skills module where we have to do a PowerPoint presentation, speak in front of 40/50 people.'</i> <i>'And also I've had a wide range of sporting experience, playing county cricket, being captain of a rugby and cricket side, so once</i>

*again having the leadership role which I would say, coming into university is... helps me a lot with being confident to put my view across and not be afraid to ask questions which I feel is a huge part of university life because that's what you've got to do to learn, you have to ask questions and try and work out solutions.'*

*'So extra curricular activities are really important for future employment because it gives you more confidence for talking to lots of different people.'*

*'I think as well it sort of gives you the confidence to take a risk because obviously when you start university you don't know what the extra curricular activities are going to be like, which is similar to starting further employment.'*

*'Extra curricular activities helps pay as anything that comes out you're ready to do it and you're ready to try new things and you're ready for everything else.'*

#### **Relaxation**

The catharsis from academic pressures derived from EAP. This keeps students' mind fresh, which facilitates academic focus.

*'I feel that extra curricular activities will have a positive effect on your academic work because they can relieve things like stress which can have a negative effect on your academic work'*

*'[Participation] is really good for like taking my mind off pressures of work'*

*'[Participation] helps me relax after the academic work'*

*'I think that extra curricular activities are good for academic study especially for myself like with course activities I find it helped me to focus and prepare myself for study and use it as a stress outlet so I think its quite good.'*

*'I believe that the researchers that think that extra curricular activities help with your studies are correct, it gives you a time to get away from your studies, relax.'*

#### **Intrapersonal Transferable Skills**

Skills independent of interaction with others.

#### **Creativity**

The ability to create new and original ideas for future employment.

*'Like I said I think it improves your creativity'*

*'things like I do art soc and that's something that encourages you to think creatively'*

#### **Generic Study Skills**

EAP can facilitate the development of a smarter learner. This can occur specifically through increased memory, organisation and problem solving abilities or a more broad development in furthering degree specific knowledge.

*'Yeah so extra curricular activities don't really hamper your studies, it actually makes you more smart and more learner [sic].'*

*'I believe that extra curricular activities kind of expand on the knowledge that you've learnt in academia'*

*'Line learning actually, I guess that has helped because I've got to memorise and learn opinions of historians that I can then quote in my exam apparently, so fair enough.'*

*'it gives me loads of support because there are other students who are in the years above me who can support me with my work and I find that really, really useful.'*

*'I think it can make it more difficult but I think it teaches you to be more organised and organisation is surely a good thing to have in academic work.'*

*'perhaps another quality that you can transfer across previous experience, like such as sport and extra curricular activities would be organisational, because there is at university so much independent time that you have to organise yourself and make sure you get your*

*work done, meet deadlines. And in a sporting context it's being organised, so turning up to training on time, although that's set up for you, you still have to turn up, have your bags packed, understand what you're going to have to do at the session, yeah basically sort everything out yourself.'*

*'I think its just as useful as the time spent for academic commitment because it doesn't take up that much time your academic what you're supposed to do and its really good to spend more time on different activities because that teaches you to manage your time really well, to be able to work more efficiently'*

*'And like I said I have to balance participating in these activities with my workload and it's helped me gain organisational skills.'*

*'So being committed to hockey as well as trying to get your degree done is a skill so it's time man... that brings in a whole bunch of other skills like time management, planning because if you don't plan you don't get your work done, prioritising because at the end of the day I'm here for a degree'*

*'From rowing I have developed a training routine, which means that I can incorporate exercise as well as keeping up with my academic work and my social life. And this environment has enabled me to manage my time better.'*

*'but there is certainly aspects and characteristics, traits that you can take from rugby for example, strategies helps towards working out problems, for example in my studies with sport and exercise science it helps with, especially biomechanics, so working out problems, finding solutions, just like in a game of rugby when you have to come up with strategies to get past and score tries against the opposition.'*

### **Literacy**

The ability to use language proficiently, through reading, writing and speaking.

*'writes for the language department which helps communication skills'*

*'So for example I am a member of the Book Society and I think that's a good transferable skill because I'm reading lots of books, so developing my literacy skills and my use of words in essays and that kind of stuff.'*

*'I'm going to church every weekend and yeah I meet some people who speak in English so I think I've improved my English when I talk to them.'*

*'I just join field trip group activities and I think it helps polish my English because I get exposed to British environment and talk to British people.'*

### **Interpersonal Transferable Skills**

Skills involved in interaction with others.

### **Group Work**

The skills associated with interaction, cooperation, and leadership other people, which when effective can boost employment productivity and allow academic problem solving. This requires an individual to be appropriate, remain calm and verbally communicate clearly, irrespective whether the other individuals are liked.

*'Teamwork, you will never learn teamwork from just sitting in your classroom and reading a book, you wont get that, you wont even get it from doing little group activities I think in classrooms, that never works. You'll only be good at it from doing something outside of the classroom because that's when you learn who you are and what kind of dynamics you cause in a team and it can be variable, sometimes you can be like the team leader, sometimes you can be someone who just participates or adds feedback'*

*'If you're meeting people and if you can get on well with them in a sports team or something like that then it's more than possible that*

you can work well in a team in the workplace and you can probably boost productivity and stuff like that.'

'Its good to work in a team and learn about leadership so that's very transferable to many jobs and employers would favour that.'

'I think patience, I think that's also quite... if you work with people you want to be patient.'

'I'm a civil engineering through to a professional, professional institution it's still a basic requirement to be able to, you know, meet new people, interact with new people, and understand that not everyone's the same, that you can't interact with everyone in the same way, some people will not respond in such a positive manner as other people.'

'dealing with personalities you might not like that much'

'As you all know basketball is a group... it's a team sport, which means again it will improve my teamwork and as an engineering student we have to work together to solve problems so this will help me improve my teamwork and my communication with other people'

'And I think that it does develop good transferable skills because playing in sport you get to develop teamwork which is highly valuable in a subject like geography.'

'I think participating in extra curricular activities is a great way to develop the sports experience because you need to work as a team and as a group so you need to interact with your members and this is the first of little practice.'

'Personally I think that sport itself is a great way of developing yourself as a person, there're a lot of skills involving teamwork, leadership, and they're all compatible when it comes back to academia.'

'they can help develop transferable skills because they teach you how to talk to people and work together in a group.'

'also I think I learnt a lot of communication skills because talking to those, the sort of children, I mean the children there completely different to talking to someone sort of my age or older.'

'Its good friendship skills, social skills and it is a fundamental part of life.'

'For example if you're participating in a group – I do music – you could develop social skills, which could be used in employment later on'

'So I used to volunteer at a sort of youth group for sort of primary school children. I think I learnt a lot of, well I think I learnt a lot of patience from it which can help me in my degree quite a lot'

### **Employment Applications and Awareness**

Specific facilitation in areas that contribute to applying for and therefore getting a job as well as relevant experience permitting an appreciation of working conditions.

### **Active in Job Search**

High efforts to seek employment with a clear focus on preference as participation facilitates an individual to become more actively engaged in other aspects of their life.

'[EAP] encourages you to like go out and do stuff for yourself, and by doing that it will make you more active in looking for future employment.'

'they give you means to figure out not just what you're studying in terms of what you like, but you can explore new things, you can try different things that you don't have any tie to, you don't have any commitment to yet, and you can just walk away, or if you enjoy you can kind of carry them on and take them into account in future career opportunity situations.'

'I think that by doing extracurricular actives I have more time... I spend more time on my studies just because I'm spending more time actually doing things rather than just kind of lazing about.'

### **Awareness of Working Practice**

An appreciation of the process of change, an understanding of job roles and an overarching appreciation of the employment sector.  
*'you can get in contact with people so you know what a chain of command is and you know that if you can't get something at that you can get in contact with people who can.'*

*'you get to know like what can and can't be changed and you get to know how things work more and like who you're supposed to talk to and the process that things are going to go through, so that's quite useful because like you can't say something and it will instantly happen.'*

*'A few examples are like work experience will allow you to transfer it to a job you have in the future, getting in work experience in the department that you prefer, or you would like to work in, will allow you to transfer your skills to employment, to your job, and make the transfer from university to a, like full time employment easier.'*

*'I did quite a lot of extra curricular sort of writing for music websites, and if I wanted to go into a job in music journalism I think that automatically has sort of given me a head start on the rest of the field.'*

*'I took a placement for example doing physiotherapy and getting up at 6 o'clock and getting back in at 6 o'clock every day and its quite hard so by doing a lot of things and having lots of commitments prepares you for a hard day in future employment.'*

#### **CV Development**

EAP can create more advantageous curriculum vitae, which helps you get the job. A contributory factor is that individuals identical on academic attributes can be distinguished using EAP, which is important, as employers are not solely attracted to high academic output.

*'they look good on a CV, which actually helps you get jobs in the first place.'*

*'I think it does prepare you to a very large extent for future employment because then you have more things to put on your CV'*  
*'I think it's a really good thing to have on your CV to begin with.'*

*'It's a good thing, again for the RA, it's a good thing to put on your CV because it's like volunteering and so employers will probably look for'*

*'I think people look for that on things like your CV. I've often been told that the extra curricular stuff really helps that and that it was useful.'*

*'From like applying to internships and stuff I feel that they regard extra curricular activities quite highly so I think its important that people get involved'*

*'But a lot of people do these extra curricular activities just for their CV as opposed to gain skills.'*

#### **Negative Outcomes**

EAP can be debilitating towards academic work.

#### **Physical fatigue and injury**

Physical activity can causes tiredness and injury, which have the potential to cause academic demotivation and negatively impact subsequent work.

*'I get really tired on Wednesdays because we have to get up at 6 in the morning and train 7 till quarter to 9 then I have a lecture straight away so I get really tired.'*

*'There's also, I've had quite a few injuries, I've already dislocated my thumb twice, I've really hurt my back, I've got bruises everywhere so that's kind of made me a bit "ugh" towards work.'*

*'I think that some extra curricular activities do take competition over academic commitments because things like sport I know from some of*

	<p>my friends can be quite demanding and they can be quite tired when they have to attend lectures and things like that.'</p> <p>'You might not want to do work straight afterwards'</p> <p><b>Time Commitment</b></p> <p>Limits time available for academic work, creating stress and disturbing academic focus.</p> <p>'It does put on a lot of pressure, having to fit in the academic work around you know the trainings and that but you just have to manage your time effectively.'</p> <p>'training's quite a lot so I don't really get any work done during the week so I can't really do much work.'</p> <p>'[Participation] does put on a lot of pressure, having to fit in the academic work around you know the trainings and that.'</p> <p>'I do get a bit behind on my homework and that because I haven't got enough time'</p> <p>'I'm struggling at the moment, haven't really got the work-play balance sorted.'</p> <p>'I think that because I do a lot of other exercise and a lot of sport and a lot of other extra curricular activities, its hard to make sure that I'm always concentrating on academic work.'</p>
<p><b>No Effect</b></p> <p>EAP does not impact wither academic work or future employment, because additional skills cannot be developed from EAP.</p> <p>'But I don't feel like you can develop like additional skills from doing them'</p> <p>'I don't think that the extracurricular activities affect my academic work much.'</p> <p>'I don't really think it's helped beyond that. I still don't think it's helped to be honest with my academic work.'</p>	<p><b>No Effect because Skill Developed But Not Transferred</b></p> <p>Certain skills have improved as a result of EAP, but not in relation to academic work.</p> <p>'So for example my teamwork has got better in my extra curricular activity but not in my work and the same with my focus and motivation.'</p> <p>'On that list I think I've developed those skills but not in relation to my academic work.'</p> <p><b>No Negative Effect because there is No Conflict Between EAP and Academic Work</b></p> <p>EAP does not affect academic work as it is a limited time commitment and occurs at non-working times. Alternatively, adequate management skills can manipulate an individual's daily routine to create no conflict, through the utilisation of organisational skills and prioritising academic work above EA.</p> <p>'Does it affect my academic work; not at the moment, we haven't had much work at the moment.'</p> <p>'I take part in cricket, football, and it doesn't really affect my academic studies, I come home and study late at night as pretty much everyone does here.'</p> <p>'And then training is sort of at times when you wouldn't really be revising anyway so 8 till 10, 5 till 7, 7 till 9, like you don't really get that much done anyway and you can revise and work after'</p> <p>'It doesn't really affect my academic work that much because I only do it once or twice a week and it only takes a few hours.'</p> <p>'I don't think they affect my academic work that much, I think I always put work first before extracurricular.'</p> <p>'It doesn't really affect my academic work too much in that I can still get it done because I'm organised and I've learnt how to organise it well, so to spread my time the way I need to'</p>
<p><b>EA Type</b></p> <p>The type of transferable skills developed is dependent upon the activity type.</p> <p>'it does also depend on what type of extra curricular activities you are doing, so that's it.'</p>	<p><b>EA Type</b></p> <p>The type of transferable skills developed is dependent upon the activity type.</p> <p>'it does also depend on what type of extra curricular activities you are doing, so that's it.'</p>

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*'I think it's useful especially like volunteering and caring opportunities.'*  
*'Transferable skills: maybe, yeah I mean it depends on the activity you do.'*  
*'Whereas I should think maybe sporting societies are not so much because they don't really help studies in particular.'*  
*'Well I believe that some extra curricular activities can just be for fun, not necessarily have to have transferable skills'*

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## Appendix H

### Factors Affecting Skill Development and Transfer Summary

Higher Order Theme	Lower Order Theme
<b>EA Characteristics</b> Qualities about the EA itself are important factors.	<b>Adaptive Motivational Climate</b> An environment conducive to participants psychological wellbeing, induced by the nature of the EA and associated significant others. The contributory elements including enjoyment, low pressure, being practical, positive encouragement and providing a network of individuals. <i>'I'm off doing lots of different things and obviously that helps no end with trying to learn new skills especially when you do it obviously you can learn easier and quicker, especially if you enjoy it.'</i> <i>'And the facilities are fantastic which makes it a lot easier as well because it's a lot more enjoyable.'</i> <i>'The extra curricular activity environment is really quite friendly and quite laid back so it's really easy to get to know people and talk and communicate with them and just get along really.'</i> <i>'I think the environment must be welcoming'</i> <i>'Some people might not be aware that they're kind of may be really good at a lead on something so maybe its down to a coach to say you've got a really good... like giving feedback, saying you've got really good leadership skills and so make them more confident.'</i> <i>'I've been doing like some student rep stuff so I'm more connected in my department and my course, which helps with my academic work so makes it easier.'</i> <i>'As well as the sort of environment I've been brought up in are, its sort of helped me to learn, nobody's getting you, getting at you for not picking up something straight away or something like that which I think is really helpful'</i> <i>'I think anything you do that's practical makes it easier for you to develop transferable skills'</i>
	<b>Leadership Role</b> Assuming a position of authority requiring an individual to take charge of a situation or group of individuals, develops the associated skills. <i>'being forced into a leadership role particularly helps you to develop transferable skills.'</i> <i>'leadership is good so if you're the team captain or something like that then that makes it easier to use it in my academic work.'</i>
	<b>Similarity of EA and Transfer Environment</b> EA has similar or identical aspects of the academic environment. <i>'the writers' society like I do law, its quite helpful in varying the writing that I do because a lot of law writing'</i> <i>'Well I play a lot of sports so teamwork helps a lot, especially with my course. My course you need a lot of teamwork, you need to be able to work in a team a lot so yeah that definitely helps.'</i>
<b>Individual Characteristics</b>	<b>Learning and Transfer mindset</b> A mindset that consists of a willingness to learn, the ability to absorb information quickly and the ability to observe the learning environment to be similar to the transfer environment. These are optimised through participating in EA from an early stage in life where you are more receptive, as well as being used to participating in a given EA. <i>'I don't think it's ever really been made harder for me, I think it's always been quite easy'... 'I think it's just, yeah I think it's something that I grasp quite naturally'</i> <i>'So I think I learn quite quickly, so if you put me in a situation where I need to learn a transferrable skill I think I, I grasp them quite quickly.'</i> <i>'I'm off doing lots of different things and obviously that helps no end with trying to learn new skills especially when you do it obviously you can learn easier and quicker'</i> <i>'A quality about me that's made it easy to develop transferable skills is approachability and willingness to learn.'</i>

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*'Okay basically in the law degree seminars play quite a big role with the degree, so groups of 10 working as a team, talking together, I do rugby, that's working as a team, functioning as a team.'*

*'I get to be a leader sometimes calling out plays; you sometimes have to be a leader in seminar group work, certainly that kind of helps quite a lot.'*

*'It made it easier for me to develop transferable skills in my academic work as well because we've got group discussions.'*

*'I think for me, because I've done extra curricular activities from an early age, I've been able to use them and develop transferable skills'... 'If you've only started to do extra curricular activities later on in your life it may be harder to do.'*

*'used to moving around and stuff so that's quite easy to transfer skills because I'm used to participating in sport all the time so I'm quite used to it'*

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#### **Positive Mental Qualities**

An innate enjoyment and interest combined with a self-assurance, adaptability and persistence in task execution.

*'Like I said earlier about the ability to motivate yourself'*

*'I'm quite a dedicated person so if I do something I'll normally stick at it unless I really hate it.'*

*'I don't see studying and I suppose rather nerdily having fun as two different things so its easier to put the two together.'*

*'because I'm quite interested in my subjects and I'm also quite interested in the activities then it makes it easier to, if I do learn any skills, to help me in my studies'*

#### **Enthusiasm**

*'I feel I'm quite an enthusiastic person'*

*'I think enthusiasm as a quality of the individual must be there for them to participate.'*

*'it's that ability to be able to feel confident enough to interact with teammates.'*

*'I am quite a confident person, I think that probably helps'*

*'But on the other hand I can be quite shy so even though I've learnt a skill I might not necessarily have the confidence to then put it into use somewhere else.'*

*'I can't transfer it to my academic work, working in teams, because of that fact that I'm, I find it hard to talk to new people.'*

*'so you kind of have to be malleable enough to take on different roles in that and that's definitely helped me in my workload when we do study groups, when we organise those.'*

*'When I was younger I moved to Switzerland and that made me quite adaptable because I was young, 9 or 10, and I was kind of thrown into an environment.'*

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#### **Social Skills**

The personal capacity to be approachable and have a willingness to engage with new people, facilitated via patience and being perceptive.

*'A quality about me that's made it easy to develop transferable skills is approachability'*

*'I like to meet new people'*

*'I guess I'm quite patient when it comes to other people actually.'*

*'I think I'm quite a good person at reading people and understanding what people are like so I can transfer... I can see... like in my extra curricular activities I can see what people are doing and like my leadership qualities and stuff like that and then I can transfer those skills across to my academic work, particularly in the group work.'*

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#### **University Characteristics**

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##### **External Assistance**

Further support to be provided from key areas at the university. This could be in the form of sessions to explain how EA can be utilised, which could be suitably implemented within further support by the careers department or with personal tutors who could also discuss EA and the degree balance.

*'Maybe have a session on how you can use extra curricular activities to your advantage but I don't really think it's necessary.'*

*'I think it could be more helpful in the Careers Department; they could do a bit more perhaps.'*

*'I don't really... I haven't really had a lot of support for work experience and that kind of stuff so I don't know where to get work experience from or anything like that and I*

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*don't really know what to do as a career. You know I do quite an ambiguous degree, it's not sort of specifically linked to anything so... but it could help in what I could go into, it will be useful.'*

*'[Personal tutors] could maybe do a bit more in order to help balance because I don't really know anyone who I can specifically talk to about being able to balance doing for example sport and my degree or things like that.'*

**Freshers Living Together**

First year accommodation is located in clusters, which allows easy interaction to share experiences.

*'I think it's easier that all the freshers are together so that means that you can talk about your things, you all live together and I think living in halls makes it easier because you are all living together and you are going through the same sorts of experiences.'*

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## Appendix I

### Factors Affecting Extracurricular Activity Participation

First Order Themes	Second Order Themes	Third Order Themes	Fourth Order Themes
<b>Autonomy</b> Factors related to an individual's desire to initiate and values participation above other pursuits.	<b>Motivation</b> The degree to which the desire to participate present.	<b>Enabler</b>	<b>Socialising with EA Participants Outside the EA</b> Meeting EA participants outside EA motivates continued participation. <i>'also a lot of people in the societies are people I see every day so they're more likely to sort of motivate me into going.'</i>
		<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Absence of EAP motivation</b> A lack of want to participate in any EA due to a lack of desire or personality dispositions. <i>'I've never really been the sort of person to want to as boring as that makes me sound'</i> <i>'I don't really want to participate in anything'</i>
			<b>EAP Interest but Absence of Motivation</b> An area of interest has been identified, but there is an absence of drive to participate. <i>'I mean I was going to do running but then I couldn't be bothered'.</i>
		<b>Priority</b> The level of importance associated with areas other than EAP, where the desire to succeed here is perceived to be in conflict with EAP.	<b>Barriers</b>
			<b>Focus on Academics</b> The primary reason for university is to obtain a degree, as such the amount of time required for this and the maintenance of academic focus does not permit EAP. <i>'I don't participate in any extra curricular activities because I'd rather just stick to academic and not be sidetracked.'</i>
			<b>Focus on University Life</b> Individuals focus on managing their transition to university rather than EAP in terms of workload, environment and making friends. <i>'because it's the first year and I wanted to concentrate on settling in, making friends and just doing the work I guess because I didn't want to commit to too many things.'</i>
		<b>Enabler</b>	<b>Raise Awareness of Importance</b> The importance of EA should be stressed more. <i>'it would be useful if the university did publicise it more and the importance of it rather than letting students come to their own conclusions and find out about it themselves'.</i>
<b>Availability</b>	<b>Existence</b>	<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Specific EA motivation without access</b>

The presence of a suitable EA and consciousness of these possibilities.	The presence of a suitably attractive EA.	<p>Participation is prevented due to inability to find personally interesting EA, regardless of a motivation to participate. <i>'Probably that I can't find one that interests me really'.</i></p> <p><b>Lack of Facilities</b> Absence of appropriate amenities for participation. <i>'I really wish there would be like music activities provided for non-music students so that we can actually use piano practice rooms or not really practice rooms but even a piano in a room so that we can practice and not lose our skills.'</i></p>
<b>Enablers</b>		<p><b>Numerous Opportunities</b> A vast range of different EAs to get involved with facilitates participation. <i>'you've got plenty of facilities available to do sports and to do, you know, different clubs and things'</i> <i>'I guess I've got like opportunities to develop new skills and opportunities to try new things.'</i></p> <p><b>Departmental Level Opportunities</b> Students suggested that opportunities, such as study groups and work experience, should occur and be promoted at the level of the degree course, as well as to 'non-typical' participants. <i>'the French department could potentially offer more extra curricular activities such as organise study groups for us instead of students organising them for themselves, although I realise that that is part of the whole individual study kind of thing'</i> <i>'aim [these opportunities] at people who aren't willing to put themselves forward so there's more than just the usual putting themselves forward.'</i></p> <p><b>Increase the Range of EAs</b> A greater range of EA types should be introduced, such as coaching, community work, less competitive sport and a selection of societies. <i>'the university could give maybe more societies to cater to more people's needs so they can also find new skills to use.'</i></p>
<b>Awareness</b> The familiarity of the EAP possibilities.	<b>Barrier</b>	<p><b>Lack of Awareness of EA</b> An absence of knowledge concerning the details of participation and an uncertainty of what EA types are available can prevent participation. <i>'I think just because I wasn't quite sure where they were, what I was doing, it was still quite new when I got to</i></p>

			<p>university’</p> <p><i>‘I haven’t really had a chance to get involved in them rather than choosing not to, I don’t really know what I could do’.</i></p>
		<b>Enabler</b>	<p><b>Raise Awareness of Opportunities</b></p> <p>Information on EAP should be increased through introducing EA fairs and advertising during lectures. More specifically, Hall sports and the Personal Skills Award should be more extensively emphasised.</p> <p><i>‘They could maybe do some like fairs and things like that to make it easier to sign up at different events’ ‘giving short talks at the start of lectures or something like advertising different opportunities that you could get involved in’.</i></p> <p><i>‘I think obviously there’s a lot of teams that you can go for, like you first team, second team etc, but I think I’d like to know especially for halls wise when events are like for example the Mason football, I might take care a bit more about that’.</i></p> <p><i>‘I think initially [the personal skills award] sounds good but unfortunately I don’t think many people will have heard about it and I don’t think it’s been publicised quite a lot’.</i></p>
<b>Accessibility</b> The degree to which EAP is practically viable.	<b>Structure</b> The manner in which the EAP access is organised and controlled.	<b>Barrier</b>	<p><b>Unsuccessful Entry</b></p> <p>EAP participation can be dependent upon a successful application, trial or audition, and so poor performance here can prevent participation.</p> <p><i>‘I’m trying to find a job but that’s not really succeeding’</i></p> <p><i>‘I have tried but unfortunately the stuff that I do is more like drama and creative stuff, we have to audition so we don’t always get like a part or a role, but I’m still trying to like kind of get a role and those kinds of things but hopefully it will pay off’.</i></p>
		<b>Enablers</b>	<p><b>More Accessible Involvement Opportunities</b></p> <p>To increase participation it was suggested that more opportunities to initiate involvement, such as more fairs and try outs, with an increase in their regularity post freshers week and less complicated application processes, should be implemented.</p> <p><i>‘there’s not enough opportunity to get involved after you’ve had the whole initial period when you kind of settle down a bit’</i></p> <p><i>‘the university could support me by</i></p>

		<p><i>organising more fairs and sport team activities, more try outs for sports teams etc.'</i></p> <p><i>'making procedures for applying for them and things like that less complicated'</i></p>
<b>Affordability</b> How financially viable EAP is.	<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Expensive EA</b> EAP is expensive and so can contribute to financial worry, preventing participation. <i>'Because at uni I was worried about money and it was all quite expensive and I wasn't sure how committed I would be.'</i>
	<b>Enablers</b>	<b>Cheap EA</b> Financially viable EAP increases accessibility. <i>'even if you don't want to spend too much there's a lot of quite cheap extra curricular activities'.</i>
<b>Proximity</b> The distance from place of residence to EAP location.	<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Lives some distance from Campus</b> Residence being located some distance away from where the EAP occurs. <i>'I live too far away, I live in The Beeches, it's like a two mile walk so I can't be bothered to come in for anything'.</i>
	<b>Enabler</b>	<b>Lives Close to Campus</b> Residence being located close to campus increases the likelihood of participation. <i>'Living close to the university has made it a lot easier to develop skills because it's easier to motivate myself to play my sport and to go to the gym and things when the sports centre is so close.'</i>
<b>Time</b> The interaction between EAP, free time and academic work time.	<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Limited Free Time</b> A lack of free time prevents EAP, which could be a result of finding time management challenging or high workload from degree. <i>'It's mainly because my degree has quite a lot of work towards it so I don't really get a great deal of time'</i> <i>'I've chosen not to participate in any extra curricular activities this year because I'm a first year obviously and I don't find that I manage my time very well'</i>
		<b>Limits Academic Time</b> Dedicating a lot of time to EAP will reduce academic work, which is exacerbated by the associated events, such as preparing for and walking to the EA.

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*'I think they probably do have a negative effect on academic work, especially if you participate in something that takes quite a lot of time'.*

*'you might have to prepare to go to an activity and that kind of stuff and it takes time to walk there and to do things like that'*

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**Course Contact Time**

Free time is often dependent on the time spent in contact with lecturers in seminars and lectures etc., which varies between courses and impacts EAP outcomes.

*'I think that it really depends on what course you're doing because, I mean, if you do a course like medicine obviously your time, you've got a lot of time on your course, whereas I do geography and there's fewer contact hours'*

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**Enablers****Have time for Both EA and Academic work**

EAP does not occur during the same time as academic work, and therefore individuals have time for both.

*'you've got plenty of time to do extra curricular activities outside whatever you do'*

*'I don't think they are necessarily in direct competition but it's definitely like because it's not at the same time as academic studies'.*

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**Academic Flexibility**

Amendments in deadlines to consider current work volume and commitments, decreasing workload and an increase in permitted completion time, would enable participation.

*'so if there's a lot going on like give them some leeway if there's a lot of deadlines and stuff going on.'*

*'they could give me less work to do which would mean I'd have more time to do things like this but I mean you just have to find a balance I guess and its up to them how much work they want to give me.'*

*'To give us less homework sheets and more time to do them.'*

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**Monitor Hours Involved**

A record should be kept of the level of time commitment each student is required to participate.

*'I think that particularly in relation to the drama society the university should perhaps monitor how many hours a person is allowed to rehearse'*

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**Alleviate Time Conflict**

Arrange EA, particularly BUCS, at times where there is no course contact, and provide multiple seminars to allow flexible attendance.

‘Or maybe just try and, maybe the club could start arranging matches and games later.’

*‘I think sometimes it’s also, it’s hard because if we’re having an away game and some people have lectures until 12 I think it’s really hard to be able to participate in that and I know some of my friends who have, say, like seminars which you can’t really miss until 11. And obviously if they’ve got an away game they have to kind of leave at 10, half-10. So it means that either they have to miss the seminar, which is bad, or they keep missing the game and then it means that you’re not really part of the team as much’... ‘So I think maybe, or maybe like have two sessions, I don’t really know.’*  
*‘They could probably schedule things, I don’t know, specifically for biosciences or like my course, so it didn’t clash with lectures’*

**Time Management Abilities**

The individual’s ability to balance out their commitments.

*‘Well it just depends because it’s down to the individual to actually be able to balance the extra curricular work.’*

*‘if you find a balance it won’t have a negative effect but if you don’t find a balance then you’re going find a negative effect.’*

*‘I think it depends on person to person; some people can balance, some people can’t.’*

**Nothing Additional the University Could Do****Current University Strategy is good**

The university already effectively supports EAP. This occurs via having a range of EA and advertising them successful as well as offering support and providing services aimed at allowing individuals to utilise transferable skills.

*‘I think the university is doing quite a lot actually, they’re really supportive of doing extra curricular activities and*

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*therefore are very pro-like showing how you can use the skills in other places'*  
*'They provide excellent training services and advice regarding academic support whilst doing an extra curricular activity.'*

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**University could not implement any additional initiatives to facilitate participation**

**Outside University**

**Responsibility**

Promotion of EAP, skill development and transfer is not the responsibility of the university.

*'it kind of defeats the point of it being an extra curricular because it's a society that you go to escape academic commitments'.*

*'I don't really think it's the university's duty to try and encourage this. I think it the students should have their own point of view taken into account because it's their choice whether to do something'.*

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